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EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY STUDIES



Austin Dobson



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PREFATORY NOTE

THESE papers have been selected from the more literary pages of half-a-dozen volumes dealing in the main with eighteenth-century themes, and issued during the last twenty years. The following lines, extracted from a rhymed introduction by the author prefixed to one of the above volumes, have been accepted as indicating, in general terms, the scope and limitations of the entire series:

I don't pretend to paint the vast
And complex picture of the Past;
Not mine the wars of humankind,
' The furious troops in battle join'd ;'
Not mine the march, the counter-march,
The trumpets, the triumphal arch.
For detail, detail, most I care
(*Ce superflu, si necessaire !*) ;
I cultivate a private bent
For episode, for incident ;
I take a page of Some One's life—
His quarrel with his friend ; his wife ;
His good or evil hap at Court ;
' His habit as he lived ' ; his sport ;
The books he read, the trees he planted ;
The dinners that he ate—or wanted :
As much, in short, as one may hope
To cover with a microscope.

These characteristics, it is believed, will not be found absent from the necessarily restricted samples here reproduced.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE JOURNAL TO STELLA	5
RICHARDSON AT HOME	18
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF ' HUMPHRY CLINKER '	34
JOHNSON'S LIBRARY	52
LADY MARY COKE	59
MATTHEW PRIOR	81
THE LATEST LIFE OF STEELE	109
BOSWELL'S PREDECESSORS AND EDITORS	127
THE COVENT-GARDEN JOURNAL	148
TITLED AUTHORS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	166
THE STORY OF THE ' SPECTATOR '	178
PERCY AND GOLDSMITH	191
MR. CRADOCK OF GUMLEY	206
LYTTELTON AS MAN OF LETTERS	224
GARRICK'S ' GRAND TOUR '	245
A FIELDING ' FIND '	264
GRAY'S BIOGRAPHER	277



EIGHTEENTH CENTURY STUDIES

THE JOURNAL TO STELLA

A DIM light was burning in the back room of a first-floor in Bury Street, St. James's. The apartment it irradiated was not an extensive one; and the furniture, sufficient rather than sumptuous, had that indefinable lack of physiognomy which only lodging-house furniture seems to possess. There was no fireplace; but in the adjoining parlour, partly visible through the open door, the last embers were dying in a grate from which the larger pieces of coal had been carefully lifted out and ranged in order on the hobs. Across the heavy high-backed chairs in the bedroom lay various neatly-folded garments, one of which was the black gown with pudding sleeves commonly worn in public by the eighteenth-century divine, while at the bottom of the bed hung a clerical-looking periwig. In the bed itself, and leaning toward a tall wax candle at the side (which, from a faint smell of singed woollen still lingering about the chamber, must recently have come into contact with the now tucked-back bed-curtain), was a gentleman of forty or thereabouts, writing in a very small hand upon a very large sheet of paper, folded, for greater convenience, into one long horizontal slip. He had dark, fierce-looking eyebrows, an aquiline nose, full-lidded and rather prominent clear blue eyes, a firmly-cut, handsome mouth, and a wide, massive forehead, the extent of which was, for the moment, abnormally exaggerated by

Eighteenth Century Studies

the fact that, in the energy of composition, the fur-lined cap he had substituted for his wig had been slightly tilted backward. As his task proceeded, his expression altered from time to time; now growing grave and stern, now inexpressibly soft and tender. Occasionally the look almost passed into a kind of grimace, resembling nothing so much as the imitative motion of the lips which one makes in speaking to a pet bird. He continued writing until, in the distance, the step of the watchman—first pausing deliberately, then moving slowly forward for a few paces—was heard in the street below. ‘Past twelve o’clock!’ came a wheezy cry at the window. ‘*Paaaaast twelvvve o’clock!*’ followed the writer, dragging out his letters so as to reproduce the speaker’s drawl. After this, he rapidly set down a string of words in what looked like some unknown tongue, ending off with a trail of seeming hieroglyphics: ‘*Nite, nown deeleast sollahs. Nite dee litt MD, Pdfr’s MD. Rove Pdfr, poo Pdfr, MD MD MD FW FW FW Lele Lele Lele Lele michar MD.*’¹ Then, tucking his paper under his pillow, he popped out the guttering candle, and turning round upon his side with a smile of exceeding sweetness, settled himself to sleep.

The personage thus depicted was Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity, vicar of Laracor by Trim, in the diocese of Meath in the kingdom of Ireland, and Prebendary of Dunlavin in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. He had not been long in London, having but recently come over at the suggestion of Dr. William King, Archbishop of Dublin, to endeavour to obtain for the Irish clergy the remission, already conceded to their English brethren, of the First Fruits and Twentieths payable to the Crown; and he was writing off, or up, his daily record of his doings to Mrs. Rebecca Dingley and Mrs. Esther Johnson, two maiden ladies, who, in his absence from the Irish Capital, were temporarily occupying his lodgings in Capel Street. At this date he must have been looking his best, for Pope’s friend,

¹ ‘Sollahs’ = Sirrahs; ‘MD,’ Stella, or My Dear, but sometimes Stella-cum-Dingley; ‘Pdfr,’ Swift; ‘FW,’ Farewell, or Foolish Wenches; ‘Lele’ is doubtful.

The Journal to Stella

Charles Jervas, who had painted him two years earlier, found him grown so much fatter and better for his sojourn in Ireland, that he volunteered to retouch the portrait. He has given it 'quite another turn,' Swift tells his correspondents, 'and now approves it entirely.' Nearly twenty years later Alderman Barber presented this very picture to the Bodleian, where it is still to be seen; and it is, besides, familiar to the collector in George Vertue's fine engraving. But even more interesting than the similitude of Swift in the fulness of his ungratified ambition are the letters we have seen him writing. With one exception, those of them which were printed, and garbled, by his fatuous namesake, Mrs. Whiteway's son-in-law, are destroyed or lost; but all the latter portion (again with exception of one), which Hawkesworth, a more conscientious, though by no means an irreproachable editor, gave to the world in 1766, are preserved in the MSS. Department of the British Museum, having fortunately been consigned in the same year by their confederated publishers to the safe keeping of that institution. They still bear, in many cases, the little seal (a classic female head) with which, after addressing them in laboriously legible fashion 'To Mrs. Dingley, at Mr. Curry's House, over against the Ram in Capel Street, Dublin, Ireland,' Swift was wont to fasten up his periodical despatches. Several of them are written on quarto paper with faint gilding at the edges—the 'pretty small gilt sheet' to which he somewhere refers; but the majority are on a wide folio page crowded from top to bottom with an extremely minute and often abbreviated script,¹ which must have tried other eyes besides those of Esther Johnson. 'I looked over a bit of my last letter,' he says himself on one occasion, 'and could hardly read it.' Elsewhere, in one of the epistles now lost, he counts up no fewer than one hundred and ninety-nine lines; and in another of those that remain, taken at a venture, there are on the first

¹ In his 'Letter to a Young Clergyman,' he hints at the cause of this, when he warns his correspondent against writing his sermons in too small a hand, 'from a habit of saving time and paper . . . acquired at the university.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

side sixty-nine lines, making, in the type of Scott's edition, rather more than five octavo pages. As for the 'little language' which produced the facial contortions above referred to (' When I am writing in our language I make up my mouth just as if I was speaking '), it has been sadly mutilated by Hawkesworth's editorial pen. Many of the passages which he struck through were, with great ingenuity, restored by the late John Forster, from whom, at the beginning of this paper, we borrowed a few of those recovered hieroglyphs. But the bulk of their ' huge babyisms ' and ' dear diminutives ' are almost too intimate and particular for the rude publicities of type. '*Dans ce ravissant opéra qu'on appelle l'amour,*' says Victor Hugo, '*le libretto n'est presque rien*'; and if for '*amour*' we read '*amitié*,' the adapted aphorism is not untrue of Swift's famous special code to Stella.

There can, however, be no question as to the pleasure with which Swift's communications must have been welcomed by the two ladies at Capel Street, not occupied, as was the writer of them, with the ceaseless bustle of an unusually busy world, but restricted to such minor dissipations as a little horse exercise, or a quiet game of ombre at Dean Sterne's, with the modest refreshment of claret and toasted oranges. Swift's unique and wonderful command of his mother tongue has never been shown to such advantage as in these familiar records, abounding in proverbs and folk-lore invented *ad hoc*,—in puns good and bad,—in humour, irony, common sense, and playfulness. One can imagine with what eagerness the large sheet must have been unfolded and read—not all at once, but in easy stages—by Mrs. Dingley to the impatient Mrs. Johnson, for whom it was primarily intended, but whose eyes were too weak to decipher it. Yet, for the modern student, the ' Journal to Stella,' taken as a whole, scarcely achieves the success which its peculiar attributes would lead one to anticipate. It remains, as must always be remembered, strictly a journal, with a journal's defects. There is a deficiency of connected interest; there is also a predominance of detail. Regarded in the light of an

The Journal to Stella

historical picture, it is like Hogarth's 'March to Finchely': the crowd in the foreground obscures the central action. It treats, indeed, of a stirring and a momentous time, for power was changing hands. The Whigs had given place to the Tories; adroit Mrs. Masham had supplanted imperious 'Mrs. Freeman'; the Great Captain himself was falling with a crash. Abroad, the long Continental war was dwindling to its close; at home, the Treaty of Utrecht was preparing. But of all these things, one rather overhears than hears. In Swift's gallery there are no portraits *à la* Clarendon with sweeping robes; at best there are but thumb-nail sketches. Nowhere have we such a finished full-length as that of Bolingbroke in the 'Inquiry into the Behaviour of the Ministry'; nowhere a scathing satire like the 'Verres' kitcat of Wharton in the seventeenth 'Examiner.' Nor are there anywhere accounts of occurrences which loom much larger than the stabbing of Harley by Guiscard or the duel of Hamilton with Mohun. Not the less does the canvas swarm with figures, many of whom bear famous names. Now it is Anna Augusta herself, driving red-faced to hounds in her one-horse chaise, or yawning behind her fansticks at a tedious reception; now it is that 'pure trifler' Harley, dawdling and temporizing,—

'Yea,' quoth the ERLE, 'but not to-day,'—

or spelling out the inn signs on the road to London. It is Peterborough, 'the ramblingest lying rogue on earth,' talking deep politics at a barber's, preparatory to starting for the world's end with the morrow; it is poor Mrs. St. John, on her way to the Bath, beseeching Swift to watch over her illustrious husband, who (like Stella!) is not to be governed, and will certainly make himself ill between business and Burgundy. Many others pass and re-pass—Congreve (*quantum mutatus!*), a broken man, but cheerful, though almost blind from 'cataracts growing on his eyes'; Prior, with lantern jaws, sitting solemnly at the 'Smyrna' receiving visits of ceremony, or walking in the Park to make himself fat, or disappearing mysteriously on

Eighteenth Century Studies

diplomatic expeditions to Paris; grave Addison rehearsing 'Cato,' and sometimes un-Catonically fuddled; Steele bustling over 'Tatlers' and 'Spectators,' and 'governed by his wife most abominably, as bad as Marlborough'; 'pastoral Philips' (with his red stockings), just arrived from Denmark; clever, kindly Dr. Arbuthnot, 'the queen's favourite physician,' meditating new 'bites' for the maids of honour or fresh chapters in 'John Bull'; young Mr. Berkeley of Kilkenny, with his 'Dialogues against Atheism' in his pocket, and burning 'to make acquaintance with men of merit'; Atterbury, finessing for his Christ Church deanery. Then there are the great ladies—Mrs. Masham, who has a red nose, but is Swift's friend; Lady Somerset (the 'Carrots' of the 'Windsor Prophecy'), who has red hair, and is his enemy; sensible and spirited Lady Betty Germaine; the Duchess of Grafton (in a *fontange* of the last reign); Newton's niece, pretty Mrs. Barton; good-tempered Lady Harley; hapless Mrs. Ann Long, and a host of others. And among them all, 'unhasting, unresting,' filling the scene like Coquelin in 'L'Étourdi,' comes and goes the figure of 'Parson Swift' himself; now striding full-blown down St. James's Street in his cassock, gown, and three-guinea periwig; now riding through Windsor Forest in a borrowed suit of 'light camlet, faced with red velvet, and silver buttons.' Sometimes he is feasting royally at 'Ozinda's' or the 'Thatched House' with the society of 'Brothers'; sometimes dining moderately in the City with Barber, his printer, or Will Pate, the 'learned woollen-draper'; sometimes scurvily at a blind tavern 'upon gill ale, bad broth, and three chops of mutton.' You may follow him wherever he goes; whether it be to Greenwich with the Dean of Carlisle, or to Hampton with 'Lord Treasurer,' or to hear the nightingales at Vauxhall with my Lady Kerry. He tells you when he buys books at Christopher Bateman's in Little Britain,¹ or spectacles for Stella on

¹ It was Bateman's singular rule (according to Nichols) not to allow persons to look into books in his shop. One wonders whether he enforced this in the case of Swift.

The Journal to Stella

Ludgate Hill, or Brazil tobacco (which Mrs. Dingley will rasp into snuff) at Charles Lillie the perfumer's in Beaufort's Buildings. He sets down everything—his maladies (very specifically), his misadventures, economies, extravagances, dreams, disappointments—his *votum*, *timor*, *ira*, *voluptas*. The *timor* is chiefly for those dogs the Mohocks ('Who has not trembled at the *Mohock's* name?'); the *ira*, to a considerable extent, for that most aggravating of retainers, his man-servant Patrick.

It has been said that the 'Journal to Stella' contains no finished character-sketch; but so many entries are involved by the peccadilloes of Patrick, that after a time he begins, from sheer force of reappearance, to assume the lineaments of a personage. At first he is merely a wheedling, good-looking Irish boy—an obvious 'Teaguelander,' as Sir Thomas Mansel calls him. He makes his entry in the third letter with the remark that 'the rabble here [*i.e.* in London] are much more inquisitive in politics than in Ireland'—an utterance which has all the air of a philosophic reflection. His natural aptitudes, however, being in the direction of pleasure rather than philosophy, he is speedily demoralized by those rakes, the London footmen. 'Patrick is drunk about three times a week,' says the next record, 'and I bear it, and he has got the better of me; but one of these days I will positively turn him off to the wide world, when none of you are by to intercede for him,' from which we must infer that Patrick was, or had been, a favourite with the ladies at Dublin. He has another vice in Swift's eyes; he is extravagant. Coals cost twelve-pence a week, yet he piles up the fires so recklessly that his economical master has laboriously to pick them to pieces again. Still, he has a good heart, for he buys a linnet for Mrs. Dingley, at a personal sacrifice of sixpence, and in direct opposition to his master's advice. 'I laid fairly before him the greatness of the sum, and the rashness of the attempt; showed how impossible it was to carry him safe over the salt sea: but he would not take my counsel, and he will repent it.' A month later the luckless bird is still alive, though grown

Eighteenth Century Studies

very wild. It lives in a closet, where it makes a terrible litter. 'But I say nothing: I am as tame as a clout.' This restraint on Swift's part is the more notable in that Patrick himself has been for ten days out of favour. 'I talk dry and cross to him, and have called him "friend" three or four times.' Then, having been drunk again, he is all but discharged, and Mrs. Vanhomrigh (a near neighbour) has to make the peace. He is certainly trying; he loses keys, forgets messages, locks up clothes at critical moments, and so forth. But he is accustomed to Swift's ways, and the next we hear of him is that, 'intolerable rascal' though he be, he is going to have a livery which will cost four pounds, and that he has offered to pay for the lace on his hat out of his own wages. Yet his behaviour is still so bad that his master is afraid to give him his new clothes, though he has not the heart to withhold them. 'I wish MD were here to entreat for him—just here at the bed's side.' Then there is a vivid little study of Swift bathing in the Thames at Chelsea, with Patrick on guard—of course quite perfunctorily—to prevent his master being disturbed by boats. 'That puppy Patrick, standing ashore, would let them come within a yard or two, and then call sneakingly to them.' After this he takes to the study of Congreve, goes to the play, fights in his cups with another gentleman's gentleman, by whom he is dragged along the floor upon his face, 'which looked for a week after as if he had the leprosy; and,' adds the diarist grimly, 'I was glad enough to see it.' Later on he exasperates his master so much by keeping him waiting, that Swift is provoked into giving him 'two or three swingeing cuffs on the ear,' spraining his own thumb thereby, though Arbuthnot thinks it may be gout. 'He [Patrick] was plaguily afraid and humbled.' That he was more frightened than repentant, the sequel shows. 'I gave him half-a-crown for his Christmas box, on condition he would be good,' says Swift, whose forbearance is extraordinary, 'and he came home drunk at midnight.' Worse than this, he sometimes stays out till morning. At last arrives the inevitable hour when he

The Journal to Stella

is 'turned off to the wide world,' and he seems never to have succeeded in coaxing himself back again. Yet it is hard not to think that Swift must have secretly regretted his loss; and it would, no doubt, have been highly edifying to hear Patrick's report of his master.

There is one person, however, for ampler details respecting whom one would willingly surrender the entire 'Patrickiad,' and that is the lady in whose interest the Journal was written, since Mrs. Rebecca Dingley, notwithstanding the many conventional references to her, does no more than play the mute and self-denying part of Propriety. But of Esther Johnson¹ we get, in reality, little beyond the fact that her health at this time was already a source of anxiety to her friends. The Journal is full of injunctions to her to take exercise, especially horse exercise, and not to attempt to read Pdfr's 'ugly small hand,' but to let Dingley read it to her. 'Preserve your eyes, if you be wise,' says a distich manufactured for the occasion. Nor is she to write until she is 'mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty well' in her sight, and is sure it will not do her the least hurt. 'Or come, I will tell you what; you, Mistress Ppt, shall write your share at five or six sittings, one sitting a day; and then comes DD altogether, and then Ppt a little crumb towards the end, to let us see she remembers Pdfr; and then conclude with something handsome and genteel, as "your most humble cumdumble," or, &c.' A favourite subject of raillery is Mrs. Johnson's spelling, which was not her strong point, though she was scarcely as bad as Lady Wentworth. 'Rediculous, madam? I suppose you mean *ridiculous*. Let me have no more of that; it is the author of the "Atalantis" spelling. I have mended it in your letter.' Elsewhere there are lists of her lapses: *bussiness* for business, *immagin*, *merrit*, *phamplets*, etc.²

¹ She signs herself thus in the autograph given at p. 101 of Sir William Wilde's 'Closing Years of Dean Swift's Life.' But according to the Richmond Register, quoted in Thorne's 'Environs of London,' 1876, p. 504, she was christened 'Hester.'

² Modern usage would sometimes side with Mrs. Johnson. For example, Swift corrects 'waist' into 'wast.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

But the letters seldom end without their playful greeting to his 'dearest Sirrahs,' his 'dear foolish Rogues,' his 'pretty saucy MD,' and the like. As his mood changes in its intensity, they change also. 'Farewell, my dearest lives and delights; I love you better than ever, if possible. . . . God Almighty bless you ever, and make us happy together. I pray for this twice every day, and I hope God will hear my poor, hearty prayers.' In another place it is 'God send poor Ppt her health, and keep MD happy. Farewell, and love Pdfr, who loves MD above all things ten millions of times.' And again, 'Farewell, dearest rogues: I am never happy but when I think or write of MD. I have enough of Courts and ministers, and wish I were at Laracor.' It is to Laracor, with its holly, and its cherry trees, and the willow-walk he had planted by the canal he had made, and Stella riding past with Joe Beaumont 'to the Hill of Bree, and round by Scurlock's Town,' that he turns regretfully when the perfidies of those in power have vexed his soul with the conviction that, for all they 'call him nothing but Jonathan,' he 'can serve everybody but himself.' 'If I had not a spirit naturally cheerful,' he says in his second year of residence, 'I should be very much discontented at a thousand things. Pray God preserve MD's health, and Pdfr's; and that I may live far from the envy and discontent that attends those who are thought to have more favour at Court than they really possess.' And then the letter winds off into those enigmatical epistolary caresses of which a specimen has been presented to the reader.

Upon Stella's reputed rival, and Swift's relations with her, the scope of this paper dispenses us from dwelling. Indeed, though Swift's visits to Miss Vanhomrigh's mother are repeatedly referred to, Esther Vanhomrigh herself—from motives which the reader will no doubt interpret according to his personal predilections in the famous *Vanessafrage*—is mentioned but twice or thrice in the entire Journal, and then not by name. But we are of those who hold with Sir Henry Craik that, whatever the

The Journal to Stella

relations in question may have been, they never seriously affected, or even materially interrupted, Swift's life-long attachment for the lady to whom, a year or two later, he was, or was not—according as we elect to side with Sir Walter Scott or Mr. Forster—married by the Bishop of Clogher in the garden of St. Patrick's Deanery. For if there be anything which is detachable from the network of tittle-tattle and conjecture encumbering a question already sufficiently perplexed in its origin, it is that Swift's expressions of esteem and admiration for Stella are as emphatic at the end as at the beginning. Some of those in the Journal have already been reproduced. But his letters during her last lingering illness, and a phrase in the Holyhead diary of 1727, are, if anything, even more significant in the unmistakable sincerity of their utterance. 'We have been perfect friends these thirty-five years,' he tells Mr. Worrall, his vicar, speaking of Mrs. Johnson; and he goes on to describe her as one whom he 'most esteemed upon the score of every good quality than can possibly recommend a human creature. . . . Ever since I left you my heart has been so sunk that I have not been the same man, nor ever shall be again, but drag on a wretched life, till it shall please God to call me away.' To another correspondent, referring to Stella's then hourly-expected death, he says: 'As I value life very little, so the poor casual remains of it, after such a loss, would be a burden that I beg God Almighty to enable me to bear; and I think there is not a greater folly than that of entering into too strict and particular a friendship, with the loss of which a man must be absolutely miserable. . . . Besides, this was a person of my own rearing and instructing from childhood; who excelled in every good quality that can possibly accomplish a human creature.' The date of this letter is July, 1726; but it was not until the beginning of 1728 that the blow came which deprived him of his 'dearest friend.' Then, on a Sunday in January, at eleven at night, he sits down to compile that, in the circumstances, extraordinary 'Character' of 'the truest, most virtuous, and valuable

Eighteenth Century Studies

friend that I, or perhaps any other person, was ever blessed with.' A few passages from this strange *Finis* to a strange story, begun while Stella was lying dead, and continued after her funeral, in a room, in which he has taken refuge in order to escape seeing the light in the church, may be here copied. 'Never,' he says, 'was any of her sex born with better gifts of the mind, or who more improved them by reading and conversation. . . . Her advice was always the best, and with the greatest freedom, mixed with the greatest decency. She had a gracefulness somewhat more than human in every motion, word, and action. Never was so happy a conjunction of civility, freedom, easiness, and sincerity. . . . She never mistook the understanding of others; nor ever said a severe word, but where a much severer was deserved. . . . She never had the least absence of mind in conversation, or was given to interruption, or appeared eager to put in her word, by waiting impatiently till another had done. She spoke in a most agreeable voice, in the plainest words, never hesitating, except out of modesty before new faces, where she was somewhat reserved; nor, among her nearest friends, ever spoke much at a time. . . . Although her knowledge, from books and company, was much more extensive than usually falls to the share of her sex, yet she was so far from making a parade of it that her female visitants, on their first acquaintance, who expected to discover it by what they call hard words and deep discourse, would be sometimes disappointed, and say they found she was like other women. But wise men, through all her modesty, whatever they discoursed on, could easily observe that she understood them very well, by the judgment shown in her observations as well as in her questions.'

In the preceding retrospect, as in the final *Birthday Poems* to Stella, Swift, it will be gathered, dwells upon the intellectual rather than the physical charms of this celebrated woman. To her mental qualities, in truth, he had invariably given the foremost place. But Time, in 1728, had long since silvered those locks once 'blacker

The Journal to Stella

than a raven,' while years of failing health had sadly altered the outlines of the perfect figure, and dimmed the lustre of the beautiful eyes. What she had been, is not quite easy for a modern admirer to realize from the dubious Delville medallion, or the inadequate engraving by Engleheart of the portrait at Ballinter, which forms the frontispiece to Wilde's invaluable 'Closing Years of Dean Swift's Life.' The photogravure of the Ballinter picture given in Mr. Gerald Moriarty's recent book is much more satisfactory, and so markedly to Esther Johnson's advantage as to suggest the further reproduction of the original in some separate and accessible form.

RICHARDSON AT HOME

It is an old truth that we are often more keenly interested in shadows than in realities, and this is especially the case with certain fictitious characters. At Gad's Hill, for example, it is less Charles Dickens that we remember, writing his last novel in the garden-chalet which had been given him by Fechter the actor, than Shakespeare's Falstaff, 'larding the lean earth' in his flight from the wild Prince and Poins. When we walk in Chiswick Mall, it is probable that the never-existent Academy of Miss Barbara Pinkerton, where Becky Sharp flung the great Doctor's 'Dixonary' out of the carriage window into the garden, is far more present to us than the memories of Mr. Alexander Pope and his patron, Richard, Earl of Burlington, both of whom had 'local habitation' in the neighbourhood. If we visit the Charterhouse, Addison and Steele, and even Thackeray himself, do not force themselves so vividly upon our recollection as does the tall, bent figure of a certain Anglo-Indian colonel with a lean brown face, and a long white moustache, who said 'Adsum' for the last time as a pensioner within its precincts. And whether this be, or be not, the experience of the imaginative, it is certain that the present writer seldom goes print-hunting at Mr. Fawcett's in King Street, Covent Garden, without calling to mind the fact, not that those most painted and palpable realities, the four Iroquois Indian Kings of the 'Spectator,' once sojourned in that very thoroughfare at the sign of the 'Two Crowns and Cushions,' but that it was 'at Mr. Smith's,' a glove shop in the same street, where 'stockings, ribbons, snuff, and perfumes,' were also sold, that, under the disguise of 'Mrs. Rachel Clark, Clarissa Harlowe lay in hiding from Lovelace; and that hard by, in the adjoin-

Richardson at Home

ing Bedford Street, the most harassed of all heroines was subsequently pounced upon by the sheriff's officers as she was coming from morning prayers at St. Paul's, Covent Garden. What a subject for Mr. Orchardson or Mr. Marcus Stone! The Tuscan portico of Paul's, with its clock and bells; the battered, brass-nailed sedan-chair, spotted with damp, and browned by exposure to the sun, waiting, the head ready up, 'at the door fronting Bedford Street'; the broad-shouldered and much-muffled minions of the law watching doggedly for their prey; the gathering circle of spectators, half-sympathetic, half-censorious; and Clarissa—poor, hunted Clarissa!—trembling, terrified, and beautiful, appearing, with her white face peeping from her 'mob,' a step or two higher than the rest, upon the dark cavity of the church-door.

There are seven volumes of Clarissa Harlowe's lamentable history, and, according to Mrs. Barbauld, there were originally two more in the manuscript. Yet one of the author's correspondents, Miss Collier—the Margaret Collier who went with Henry Fielding to Lisbon—tells Richardson that she is reading the book for the fourth time! As one turns the pages, one almost grows incredulous. Did she really read all that—four times? Did she really read those thirteen pages of the heroine's will, four several times? To doubt a lady, and a friend of Richardson to boot, is inexcusable; but, at all events, the exploit is scarcely one to be repeated in this degenerate age. Not that the only obstacle is the length of the story. Other writers—even writers of our own day—are long. If 'Pamela' is in four volumes, so is the 'Cloister and the Hearth'; if 'Clarissa' and 'Sir Charles Grandison' are in seven volumes, there are eight of 'Monte Cristo' and ten of 'Les Misérables.' But there is length of time, and length of tedium. Besides words, and sentences, and paragraphs, and chapters, the masterpieces above-mentioned also contain, to a greater or lesser extent, abundance of plot, of movement, of incident, of character. Richardson is long with a minimum of these, and he is also deplorably diffuse, copious, long-winded, circum-

Eighteenth Century Studies

stantial. He plays his piece—to borrow a musical illustration—to the very slowest beat of the metronome. He can concentrate his thoughts upon his theme, but he cannot concentrate the expression of them; and, as he admitted to Young, for one page that he takes away he is apt to add three. What is worse, as MM. Janin and Prévost have proved in France, and Mrs. Ward and Mr. E. S. Dallas in England, you can no more cut him down now than his friends could do in his lifetime. Aaron Hill, who endeavoured to abridge the first seven letters of ‘Clarissa,’ confessed, after making the attempt, that he only spoilt them; and in casting about for an explanation of his failure, he happens upon the truth. ‘You have,’ he says, ‘formed a style . . . where verbosity becomes a virtue; because, in pictures which you draw with such a skilful negligence, redundance but conveys resemblance; and to contract the strokes, would be to spoil the likeness.’ This, in other words, is but to say that the prolixity of Richardson, if it be a cause of weakness, is also a source of strength. It is his style; and the Style, in this case, is the Man, or, in the explicit language of the first form of the aphorism, *l’homme même*—the very Man.

At Stationers’ Hall, of which institution in later life he became a Master, there is an excellent likeness of Richardson as he appeared to his contemporaries. It was executed by Joseph Highmore, ‘a painter of eminence,’ says Mrs. Barbauld, ‘at a time when the arts were at a very low ebb in England’—an utterance which suggests some disregard on the part of that otherwise unimpeachable biographer of the efforts of William Hogarth. Highmore, who was a personal friend of Richardson, had already made a series of studies for ‘Pamela’; and he painted Clarissa ‘in a Vandyke dress,’ a conceit which must then have been popular, since both Walpole and Gray masqueraded to Eckhardt in similar costume. Under Highmore’s brush, Richardson is depicted as a middle-aged and plump little man in a claret-coloured coat, holding his right hand in his bosom, a habit to which he more than once refers. In his left hand is an open

Richardson at Home

letter. He wears a flaxen wig which covers his ears, has a fresh-coloured complexion, a comfortable double chin, and a general look of grey-eyed and placid, if slightly flabby, benignity.

By nature he is said to have been slow and taciturn, but among friends, and especially in the 'fitting environment' of that 'flower-garden of ladies' which he loved to gather about him, he became animated, and even playful. His health was bad; like Swift, whom he adapts,—

'That old vertigo in my head
Will never leave me till I'm dead,'—

he was subject to attacks of giddiness; and he suffered from a variety of nervous ailments, the majority of which might be traced to his sedentary habits, and the relentless industry with which he pursued his vocation as a printer, and his avocation as an author. 'I had originally,' he says, 'a good constitution. I hurt it by no intemperance, but that of application.' Unlike most men of his generation, he was a vegetarian and water-drinker; unlike them again, he never learned to ride, but contented himself with that obsolete apology for equestrian exercise, the chamber-horse—a species of leathern seat upon four legs and a strong spring, still sometimes to be discovered in the forgotten corners of second-hand furniture shops. One of these contrivances he kept at each of his houses; and those who, without violence to his literary importance, can conceive the author of 'Sir Charles Grandison' so occupied, must imagine him bobbing up and down daily, at stated hours, upon this curious substitute for the saddle.

The 'chamber-horse' is not included in Highmore's picture, which, it may be observed, was successfully scraped in mezzotinto by James McArdell. But the artist has not forgotten another article which played an indispensable part in Richardson's existence, to wit, his ink-bottle. This, for convenience' sake, it was his custom to have sunk into the right-hand arm of his chair, where it is accordingly depicted by the artist, decorated with a

Eighteenth Century Studies

quill of portentous dimensions. Taken in connection with the letter in his hand, the detail is characteristic. No man, in truth, ever set pen to paper with greater pertinacity. If Pope lisped in numbers, Richardson certainly lisped in 'epistolary correspondence.' He was a letter-writer, and, what is more, a moral letter-writer, almost from his 'helpless cradle.' Two anecdotes, both on the best authority—his own—show how markedly these prevailing qualities of scribbling and sermonizing were with him from the beginning. At school, where he was noted for his edifying stories, one of his playfellows endeavoured to persuade him to write the history of a footman (virtuous) who married his mistress; and he had not attained the mature age of eleven before he addressed an admonitory but anonymous epistle to a backbiting widow of fifty, who had distinguished herself more by the severity of her precepts than the assiduity of her practice. His indefatigable pen found, however, a more legitimate employment in the service of the young women of the neighbourhood, who made use of his equipments and his discretion to convey their written sentiments to their sweethearts—an office which must have been a sort of liberal education in love affairs, since he had frequently not only to explain what was meant, but also to supply what was wanted. 'I cannot tell you what to write,' said one warm-hearted girl, enraptured with her lover's protestations, 'but you cannot be too kind.' Obviously it was in these confidences, for which, even in youth, his grave and very grown-up demeanour especially qualified him, that he laid the foundation of his marvellously minute knowledge of the female heart. When his leaning to literature determined his choice of the trade of a printer, letter-writing was still his relaxation; and all his leisure was absorbed by a copious correspondence with an unnamed and eccentric gentleman who was, on his side, to use Walpole's phrase, equally 'corresponding.' As he proceeded from 'prentice to master, his reputation as a letter-writer increased proportionately; and when Messrs. Rivington and Osborne suggested to him the book that

Richardson at Home

afterward grew into 'Pamela,' it was almost inevitable that it should take an epistolary form. After 'Pamela' it was equally inevitable that the author should cling to the pattern in which his first success had been achieved. It may, indeed, be a matter for nice speculation whether he could have produced a novel in any other way, so inveterate had his habit of letter-writing become. He confesses himself that he wrote far more than he read. 'I cannot tell why, but my nervous disorders will permit me to write with more impunity than to read.' His works certainly do not show him to have been a well-read man, though, as a quondam Blue Coat boy he was probably better educated than is generally supposed. But it is clear that to the day of his death the writing of letters was his ruling passion, as well as the standing occupation of his daughters, who were unceasingly employed in transcribing the leisurely effusions which form the basis of Mrs. Barbauld's selection. When a letter left the little board, duly shown in Chamberlin's portrait, upon which it was composed, it was handed to Anne or Martha to copy, and the copy was preserved as carefully as if it had been an original work. Several hundred of these methodical but immoderate epistles, making with the replies six huge volumes, are still to be seen in the Forster Collection at South Kensington. They include many unpublished documents, which, when Richardson's uneventful career finds its fitting chronicler, will probably be discovered to contain particulars of interest. The late Mr. Malcolm Kingsley Macmillan, it is understood, had made considerable progress in 'prospecting' this mine of material.¹

After the fashion of the tradesman of his time, Richardson lived chiefly in the city, with a country house in the suburbs for Sundays. When, having duly passed through his probation as a compositor and press corrector, he married his master's daughter (like Hogarth's

¹ There are some scattered references to this task in his 'Letters' (Privately printed, 1893). 'I have been copying Richardson's will,' he says in one of them. 'It throws light on the reserve he exercised about his relatives, showing that they harassed and sponged on him' (p. 144).

Eighteenth Century Studies

industrious apprentice), he opened a business on his own account in Fleet Street. Thence he moved to Salisbury Court, now Salisbury Square, a region which, as it could boast of Dryden as a former resident, and probably of Locke, was not without its literary memories. His first house was in the centre of the Court. Later on—and not, it is said, at all to the satisfaction of the second Mrs. Richardson—he moved his residence to No. 11 in the north-west corner; and, pulling down at the same time a number of old houses in Blue Ball Court (now Bell's Buildings) on the eastern side, constructed for himself 'an extensive and commodious range' of offices. It was certainly in Salisbury Court that Richardson wrote part of his works; and here he was visited by Johnson, Young, Hogarth, Dr. Delany, and others of his intimates. It must have been in this establishment, too, that Goldsmith laboured as a corrector of the press, having, it is said, made Richardson's acquaintance through a disabled master-printer, one of the doctor's Bankside patients. But not many anecdotes cluster about the dwelling-place in the little square in the shadow of St. Bride's, beyond the legend that Richardson used occasionally to hide a half-crown among the types as a reward to the exemplary workman who should be first at his work in the morning. There is also a tradition that, in later life, he was so sensible of the infirmities of his own nervous temperament and of the intractable deafness of his foreman, that he never trusted himself to give any oral orders, but characteristically issued all his business directions in writing.

His first country house, now known as The Grange, still exists, with its old wrought-iron gates, at 50, North End Road, Fulham. 'A few paces from Hammersmith Turnpike' was the indication which Richardson gave to 'Mrs. Belfour'; a more exact description to-day would be, 'a few paces from the West Kensington Station of the District Railway.' In Richardson's time the house consisted of two distinct dwellings—the novelist occupying the western half, while the tenant of the remaining

Richardson at Home

portion was a certain Mr. Vanderplank, often referred to in Richardson's letters. It retains its dual character, and continues to wear much of the aspect which it formerly presented. Stucco, it is true, has been allowed in part to disfigure the original red brick; windows have been blocked here and there; and a balcony has been added, of which no sign appeared when, in May, 1804, the building was sketched for volume four of Mrs. Barbauld's correspondence. But the house no longer stands, as it must have stood when Richardson walked to it through the Park, in the open country; and only a few of the fine old cedars and other forest trees which formerly flourished in its neighbourhood have survived the inroad of bricks and mortar. One of its occupants after Richardson was Sir William Boothby, who married the charming actress, Mrs. Nisbett.¹ But for the last quarter of a century it has had a still more distinguished inmate in that painter of

‘ Fair passions and bountiful pities,
And loves without stain,’

Sir E. Burne-Jones, who, although intermediate tenants have effectually obliterated all definite memorials of the Richardsonian era, still cherishes a kindly reverence for his last-century predecessor. At ‘Selby House,’ as The Grange seems to have been then called, Richardson lived from 1730, or earlier, until October, 1754; and it follows that while residing at North End he wrote not only ‘Pamela,’ but ‘Clarissa’ and ‘Sir Charles Grandison,’ the final volumes of which last appeared early in the latter year.

Which of the rooms he used for his study, when his numerous visitors made no special claims upon his attention, is not now discoverable. But his favourite writing-place was an arbour or grotto at the back of the house, no visible trace of which remains. It is described by a

¹ Sir William Boothby died in 1846, and his widow returned to the stage. She was famous as ‘Constance’ in ‘The Hunchback’ of Sheridan Knowles, and as ‘Lady Gay Spanker’ in Boucicault’s ‘London Assurance.’ She survived until 1858, and is buried at St. Leonard’s-on-Sea.

Eighteenth Century Studies

visitor, Mr. Reich of Leipsic, as being 'in the middle of the garden, over against the house'; and it contained a seat or chair in which Richardson was accustomed to work. 'I kissed the ink-horn on the side of it,' says the perfervid gentleman from Saxony, thus conveniently confirming a detail in Highmore's picture. According to Mrs. Barbauld, Richardson was in the habit of repairing to this retreat in the morning, before the rest of the family were up; and 'when they met at breakfast, he communicated the progress of his story, which, by that means, had every day a fresh and lively interest. Then [says his biographer] began the criticisms, the pleadings, for Harriet Byron or Clementina; every turn and every incident was eagerly canvassed, and the author enjoyed the benefit of knowing beforehand how his situations would strike.' These breakfast-table discussions must have been invaluable to a writer of Richardson's type; and they were renewed at other times in the grotto itself. Miss Highmore, the artist's daughter, who was no mean draughtswoman, has left a little sketch in which one of these meetings is depicted. She has probably exaggerated the size of the grotto, which looks exceptionally spacious; but it must have been large enough to hold seven people, since, as shown in the picture, there are seven in it. It is as bare of ornament as the cabinet of M. de Buffon, a table and chairs being the only furniture. To the left, Richardson, in his habitual velvet cap and morning gown, is reading the MS. of 'Grandison'; Miss Mulso (afterward 'the celebrated Mrs. Chapone'), a handsome young woman, is in the middle; the others are her father and brother, her brother's future wife, Miss Prescott, Miss Highmore, and Miss Highmore's lover, Mr. Duncombe. The ladies, in their Pamela hats, are dignified and decorously attentive, while the attitudes of the gentlemen rise easily to the occasion. Their management of their legs in particular is beyond all praise. For the rest, Mr. Mulso the elder is feeling for his handkerchief; Mr. Mulso junior has his hands in his bosom; and the Rev. John Duncombe is taking snuff with an air which

Richardson at Home

would do credit to the *vieille cour*, or even to the irreproachable Sir Charles himself.¹

As a valetudinarian whose life was spent between steel and tar-water, it might have been expected that Richardson would often be absent from London in search of health. But, beyond his periodical visits to North End—visits which, as he advanced in years and prosperity, naturally grew more frequent and more prolonged—he seems to have seldom left town, and to have resorted but rarely to the fashionable watering-places of his day. He says, indeed, in one of his letters to Young, that he had often tried Bath, but without benefit; and it may well be conceived that the Bath of Smollett's time, with its bells and its bustle, was wholly unsuited to his nervous and highly-strung temperament. The place most often in his letters is Tunbridge Wells, where Thackeray puts him in the 'Virginians.' In the middle of the last century, the Wells had always its recognized supporters, who, in due season, religiously perambulated the shady walks, loitered at the toy-shops on the red-roofed Pantiles, or crowded in the Tea Room round the last new 'Cynthia of the minute.' In her third volume, Mrs. Barbauld reproduces an old water-colour drawing which once belonged to Richardson, and which (it is alleged) bore in his own writing the names of many of the notabilities of the place. The Hon. Miss Chudleigh, 'Maid of Honour to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales,' in a monstrous side-hoop, 'swims' or 'sails' up the centre between Beau Nash and Mr. Pitt; Dr. Johnson is talking deferentially to the Bishop of Salisbury; the septuagenarian Cibber is following like a led-captain close upon the heels of Lord Harcourt, while Garrick—the great Garrick himself—is chatting amicably with the famous *prima donna*, Giulia Frasi. Among the rest you may distinguish another 'professional beauty,' Miss Peggy Banks (who afterward married Lord Temple's brother); Arthur Onslow, the philanthropic Speaker of the House of Commons; and the

¹ Mr. Duncombe was the author of the 'Feminead,' 1754, and, like Mr. Mulso, junior, wrote for the 'World.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

lanky form of Chesterfield's 'respectable Hottentot,' Lyttelton. In a corner, at an unconscionable distance from her husband, is Mrs. Johnson, and hard by, Whiston of 'Josephus' and the longitude—

' The longitude uncertain roams,
In spite of Whiston and his bombs,'

Finally, in the right foreground, his left hand in his breast, his right steadied upon his cane as a precaution against giddiness, is the little figure of Richardson, shuffling along, circumspect and timorous, as he describes himself to his dear Miss Highmore. After making mild fun of the fantastic appearance presented by those ancient ladykillers, Mr. Nash and Mr. Cibber, hunting 'with faces of high importance' after new beauties, he proceeds to draw his own likeness. He is, he says, 'a sly sinner, creeping along the very edges of the walks, getting behind benches: one hand in his bosom, the other held up to his chin, as if to keep it in its place: afraid of being seen, as a thief of detection. The people of fashion, if he happen to cross a walk (which he always does with precipitation) *unsmile* their faces, as if they thought him in their way; and he is sensible of so being, stealing in and out of the bookseller's shop, as if he had one of their glass-cases under his coat. Come and see this odd figure!'¹

When Richardson extended his business premises at Salisbury Court, he also moved his 'country box' from Fulham to Parson's Green. Of this Parson's Green house—an old mansion once occupied by a Caroline Lord Chief

¹ The artist of this sketch, long in the possession of Richardson's family, was Loggan the dwarf, whose diminutive figure appears in the left-hand corner, where he is talking to the woman of the Wells. He made many similar drawings of the notabilities at the different watering-places. Upon the strength of this one, Malone and others have assumed that Samuel Johnson was at Tunbridge in 1748. It is, however, by no means certain that he is the 'Dr. Johnson' here represented. The names of the characters are said to be inserted in Richardson's own handwriting. But, as Dr. Birkbeck Hill points out (Boswell's 'Life,' i. 190 n.), Samuel Johnson did not receive a doctor's degree until more than four years after Richardson's death in 1761; and therefore could not have been described by Richardson as 'Dr.' Johnson.

Richardson at Home

Justice, Sir Edmund Saunders—no trace now remains, and the neighbourhood itself is greatly altered. Tradition speaks, however, of a porch with seats, from which Richardson was accustomed to welcome his guests; and there was also an alcove which found its poet:

‘ Here GRANDISON, to crown the whole,
A bright exemplar stands confest!
Who stole those virtues we admire
From the great Author’s glowing breast.’

O Sacred seat ! be thou rever’d
By such as own thy master’s pow’r;
And, like his works, for ages last,
Till fame and language are no more.

So ‘sings the bright-haired muse’ in volume five of Dodsley’s ‘Collection.’ Unluckily, all the immortal works referred to were, as already stated, composed at North End.¹ At his new home, Richardson still continued to receive his friends, to write to them at immeasurable length, or to read to them what he had written at equal length to other people. Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, of the ‘Female Quixote,’ who was a frequent visitor at this time, could scarcely recall an occasion upon which ‘her host had not rehearsed at least one, but probably two or three voluminous letters, if he found her in the humour of listening with attention.’ Of such ‘lucubrations’ his printed correspondence is composed. It has, indeed, a certain unity, for the subject is almost exclusively himself and his novels; but it can only by courtesy be called absorbing. His habitual male correspondents were none of them of the first order. The most eminent were Young, who was a poet, and Edwards (of the ‘Canons of Criticism’), who was a scholar, but Cibber and Aaron Hill represent the general level. It was in his lady correspondents that he was most fortunate. Henry Fielding’s sisters, Sally and Patty, had something of their brother’s

¹ The error is repeated in Malcolm’s engraving (May 7, 1799) of the Parson’s Green house, which has for title, ‘The House at Fulham in which Richardson wrote *Clarissa*.’ The building represented is, however, entirely different from that at North End.

Eighteenth Century Studies

genius; the two Miss Colliers, daughters of Arthur Collier, the metaphysician, were also remarkable women, while Mrs. Delany, Miss Highmore, Miss Mulso, Miss Talbot, and Mrs. (or more strictly) Miss Donellan were all far beyond the eighteenth-century average of what Johnson called 'wretched *unidea'd* girls.' To the nervous little genius they must have been invaluable, for they not only supplied him continuously with that fertilizing medium of sympathetic encouragement which robust spirits call by the grosser name of adulation, but their comments and discussions upon his work while in progress afforded much of the stimulus and none of the irritation of applied criticism. They were his School of Emotion; and no one was better aware of the fact than he was. 'I have often sat by in company,' he tells Lady Echlin, 'and been silently pleased with the opportunity given me, by different arguers, of looking into the hearts of some of them, through windows that at other times have been closed.'

The longest series of his letters is addressed to Lady Echlin's sister, and both in its origin and its development it is the most interesting. In 1748, when the first four volumes of 'Clarissa' had appeared, a letter purporting to come from Exeter was received by Richardson from an unknown correspondent. Referring to the current rumour that the book would end unhappily, the writer requested confirmation of this in the 'Whitehall Evening Post,' where Richardson accordingly inserted a notice. Shortly afterward came an impassioned communication appealing strongly against his decision, in words which must have thrown him into a twitter of gratified agitation. 'If you disappoint me,' said 'Mrs. Belfour' (for so she signed herself), 'attend to my curse: May the hatred of all the young, beautiful, and virtuous, for ever be your portion! and may your eyes never behold anything but age and deformity! may you meet with applause only from envious old maids, surly bachelors, and tyrannical parents! may you be doomed to the company of such! and, after death, may their ugly souls haunt you! Now make Lovelace and Clarissa unhappy if you dare.' Richardson replied

Richardson at Home

as an artist, defending, with more decision than might have been expected, his foregone conclusion; and the correspondence, protracted while the book progressed to its final volume, was continued subsequently, degenerating at last into a species of decorous elderly flirtation. The writer proved to be a Lady Bradshaigh, of Haigh, near Wigan, in Lancashire—Exeter having been only given as a blind. When a lady confesses to have shed a pint of tears (for this is the precise liquid measure specified) over one's work, a certain curiosity is perhaps excusable, and, as time went on, Richardson obviously grew anxious to make his *Incognita's* personal acquaintance. The later letters reveal a good deal of finessing on both sides—on his, to identify the lady at various places where she announced she should be; on hers, to see him without being seen herself. At last, in March, 1750, they came together; and the further correspondence of Lady Bradshaigh with Richardson fills Mrs. Barbauld's sixth volume. In one of the earlier letters he gives a minute and often-quoted description of himself, from which some particulars have already been borrowed in describing his portrait.

Lady Bradshaigh seems to have somewhat disconcerted Richardson by her undisguised partiality for that reprehensible personage, Lovelace. She must have exercised him still more by the indulgence with which she referred to 'Clarissa's' rival, 'Tom Jones.' With much of the little man's annoyance at what he called the 'lewd and ungenerous engraftment' upon 'Pamela' of 'Joseph Andrews,' it is difficult not to sympathize, but his continual exhibitions of irritation are certainly undignified. Fielding's recognition, in the 'Jacobite's Journal,' of the genius of 'Clarissa' was powerless to mollify him, and his utterances are almost abject in their querulous ill-nature. He finds the characters and situations in 'Amelia' 'so wretchedly low and dirty' that he cannot get beyond the first volume; 'Tom Jones' is a 'spurious brat' with 'a coarse title'; its author has overwritten himself; he hath no invention; his works have no sale—and so forth. But

Eighteenth Century Studies

the most ludicrous disclosure of his mingled animosity and jealousy is to be found in an unpublished correspondence at South Kensington with Aaron Hill's daughters, Astræa and Minerva. He has not, he announces, as yet brought himself to read 'Tom Jones,' though he clearly knows a great deal about the book; and he asks the two girls to report upon it, manifestly anticipating from them as known and fervent admirers of the Clarissa, a verdict entirely consolatory to his own uneasy vanity. But the fair critics, who, despite their absurd and actual names (there was a third sister, Urania), were evidently very sensible young women, return what, making due allowance for some transparent conciliation of the sensitive author they are addressing, is a remarkably just appreciation of Fielding's masterpiece. It was, in fact, a great deal too just for their correspondent, who, though he still claims to have been discouraged from reading the book, does not on that account scruple in his rejoinder to criticise the hero, the heroine, and the plot with such asperity as to draw tears of mortification from the fine eyes of Minerva and Astræa, who cannot endure that Mr. Richardson should think it possible that they could 'approve of Any thing, in Any work, that had an *Evil Tendency*.' They have still the courage, however, to maintain (through their father) that, when Mr. Richardson has time to study 'Tom Jones' for himself, he will find 'a Thread of Moral Meaning' in it. Whether he did eventually peruse it, history has not recorded. For the moment he preferred to write another long letter condemning it on hearsay, but he refrained from prejudicing his judgment by making its acquaintance at first hand. That he would ever have approved it, is scarcely to be hoped. The wound inflicted by 'Joseph Andrews' remained incurable. It was *nulla medicabilis herba*.

To-day the rivals lie far enough apart: the one on the hill at Lisbon, the other in St. Bride's. It is a favourite commonplace of literature to fable that, in some Lucianic and ultra-Stygian Land of Shadows, the great ones who have departed meet again, and adjust their former

Richardson at Home

differences. But whatever may come to pass in another sphere, it is not easy to conceive of any circumstances in which these two could ever have lived harmoniously on this particularly earthy planet of ours. No men were ever more absolutely antipathetic—more fundamentally and radically opposed—than Richardson with his shrinking, prudish, careful, self-searching nature, and Fielding with his large, reckless, generous, exuberant temperament. Their literary methods were no less at variance. The one, with the schooling of a tradesman, was mainly a *spectator ab intra*; the other, with the education of a gentleman, mainly a *spectator ab extra*. If one had an unrivalled knowledge of Woman, the other had an unrivalled experience of Man. To Richardson's subjective gifts were added an extraordinary persistence of mental application, and a merciless power of cumulative detail; to Fielding's objective faculty, the keen perceptions of a humorist, and a matchless vein of irony. Both were reputed to have written '*le premier roman du monde*.' Each has been called by his admirers 'the Father of the English Novel.' It would be more exact to divide the paternity—to speak of Richardson as the Father of the Novel of Sentiment, and Fielding as the Father of the Novel of Manners.

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF 'HUMPHRY CLINKER'

'No one will contend,' says Henry Fielding in the Preface to one of his sister's books, 'that the epistolary Style is in general the most proper to a Novelist, or that [and here he was plainly thinking of a certain work called "Pamela"] it hath been used by the best Writers of this Kind.' The former part of the proposition is undeniable; but however true the latter may have been when Fielding wrote in 1747, it is scarcely as true now. Even if we omit for the moment all consideration of modern examples, 'Clarissa' and 'Sir Charles Grandison'—both of them novels told by letters, and in one of which Richardson emphatically vindicated his claim to rank among the 'best Writers'—followed 'Pamela' before Fielding's death. Half-a-dozen years after that event, another and a greater than Richardson adopted the same medium for a masterpiece; and the sub-title of Rousseau's '*Nouvelle Héloïse*' is, '*Lettres de deux Amants, habitants d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes*.' Still later—in 1771—the 'epistolary Style' was chosen, for his final fiction, by one of Fielding's own countrymen; and in the success of the enterprise, the fact that it was achieved in what Mrs. Barbauld correctly defines as 'the most natural and the least probable way of telling a story,' has fallen out of sight. To think of 'Grandison' or 'Clarissa' is to remember that the prolixity of those prolix performances is increased by the form; but in Smollett's '*Humphry Clinker*' the form is scarcely felt as an objection, assuredly not as an obstruction. It is true, also, that between Smollett's last and best book and the books of the authors mentioned there are some other not unimportant

‘Humphry Clinker’

differences. One of these lies in the circumstance that his communications are never replied to—a detail which, however irritating in a practical correspondence, obviates in a novel much of the wearisome repetition usually charged against epistolary narrative; another difference is, that there is no serious approach to anything like a connected story in the detached recollections of travel recorded by the characters in ‘Humphry Clinker.’ Entertaining in themselves, those characters in their progress encounter other characters who are equally entertaining, and an apology for a conclusion is obtained by the conventional cluster of marriages at the end; but as far as the intrigue itself is concerned, the book would have been just as amusing if Tabitha Bramble had never become Mrs. Lismahago, or if Winifred Jenkins, in her ‘plain pea-green tabby sack, Runnela cap, ruff toupee and side curls,’ had declined to bestow herself upon the fortunate foundling who gives his name to the volumes, although—to quote a contemporary critic—he ‘makes almost as inconsiderable a figure in the work as the dog does in the history of Tobit.’

But it is not our present intention to hunt old trails with a new ‘appreciation’ of the misnamed ‘Expedition of Humphry Clinker.’ Matthew Bramble and Obadiah Lismahago, the ‘squire’s sister and her Methodist maid, have passed permanently into literature, and their places are as secure as those of Partridge and Parson Adams, of Corporal Trim and ‘my Uncle Toby.’ Not even the Malapropism of Sheridan or Dickens is quite as riotously diverting, as rich in its unexpected turns, as that of Tabitha Bramble and Winifred Jenkins, especially Winifred, who remains delightful even when deduction is made of the poor and very mechanical fun extracted from the parody of her pietistic phraseology. That it could ever have been considered witty to spell ‘grace’ ‘grease,’ and ‘Bible’ ‘bye-bill,’ can only be explained by the indiscriminate hostility of the earlier assailants of Enthusiasm. Upon this, as well as upon a particularly evil-smelling taint of coarseness which, to the honour of the author’s

Eighteenth Century Studies

contemporaries, was fully recognized in his own day as offensive, it is needless now to dwell. But there is an aspect of 'Humphry Clinker' which has been somewhat neglected—namely, its topographical side; and from the fact that Smollett, in the initial pages, describes it as 'Letters upon Travels,' it is clear that he himself admitted this characteristic of his work. When he wrote it at Leghorn in 1770, he was using his gamut of personages mainly to revive, from different points of view, the impressions he had received in his last visits to Bath, to London, and to certain towns in his native North. We are told by Chambers that his pictures of life at these places were all accepted by his relatives as personal records; and though some of the first reviews condemned him for wasting time on descriptions of what every one then knew by heart, we are not likely to insist upon that criticism now, when nearly a century and a quarter of change has lent to those descriptions all the charm—the fatal charm—of the remote and the half-forgotten. For this reason we propose to run rapidly through 'Humphry Clinker,' selecting for reproduction chiefly such passages as deal with actual localities. The reader will only require to be reminded that the persons of the drama are the Welsh 'squire, Matthew Bramble (a *bourru bienfaisant* who has many characteristics of the author himself); Mrs. Tabitha Bramble, his sister (an old maid); his niece and nephew, Lydia and Jerry Melford; and the two servants, Humphry Clinker and Winifred Jenkins.

When we first make acquaintance with the little party they have arrived from Gloucester at Clifton, whence they repair to the Hot Well at Bristol. Their different ways of regarding things are already accentuated. Mr. Bramble pooh-poohs the 'nymph of Bristol spring' as purveying nothing but 'a little salt, and calcareous earth,' while on the boasted Clifton Downs he discovers only the demon of vapours and perpetual drizzle. To his niece Liddy, on the contrary, everything looks rose-coloured. The Downs, with the furze in full blossom (it was late April), are delightful; the waters are most agreeable ('so pure, so

‘ Humphry Clinker ’

mild, so charmingly mawkish!'); and the ships and boats going up and down the Avon under the windows of the Pump-room make ‘an enchanting variety of moving pictures.’ But the spring season is beginning at Bath; and they migrate to that place, taking a first floor in the South Parade, so as to be near the waters and out of the rumble of the carriages. The lodgings, however, are themselves noisy, besides being too close to the noisy bells of the Abbey Church, which ring for all new comers (who pay the fee of half-a-guinea). Mr. Bramble has no sooner settled down comfortably than they begin to peal in honour ‘of Mr. Bullock, an eminent cow-keeper of Tottenham, who had just arrived at Bath, to drink the waters for indigestion.’ These, with other annoyances, lead them to quit the Parade precipitately for Milsom Street (‘Milsham-street,’ Mr. Bramble calls it) which then had not long been built. Here at five guineas a week they get a small house. For Miss Melford, Bath is even more fascinating than Bristol. The bells, the waits, the cotillons, the balls and concerts in the Pump-room, are all equally entrancing to the fresh schoolgirl nature but recently emancipated from Mrs. Jermyn’s finishing Academy at Gloucester. They are no sooner settled in their lodgings than the party is visited by the Master of the Ceremonies—‘a pretty little gentleman, so sweet, so fine, so civil, and polite, that in our country [Miss Melford’s] he might pass for the prince of Wales.’ ‘He talks so charmingly, both in verse and prose, that you would be delighted to hear him discourse; for you must know he is a great writer, and has got five tragedies ready for the stage.’ This personage, whose name is afterwards given, was Beau Nash’s successor, Samuel Derrick, only one of whose dramatic efforts—a translation from the French of Frederick of Prussia—appears, by the ‘*Biographia Dramatica*,’ to have attained the honours of print. Derrick, as might be expected, does himself the pleasure of dining with Mr. Bramble, and next day escorts the ladies round the Circus, the Square [Queen’s Square], the Parades, and the ‘new buildings,’ the last, no doubt,

Eighteenth Century Studies

including the Royal Crescent of the younger Wood, then in course of construction.¹

In the letter which gives these particulars Miss Liddy proceeds to describe a Bath day as it appeared to the Young Person of the period. 'At eight in the morning,' says she, 'we go in dishabille to the Pump-room; which is crowded like a Welsh fair; and there you see the highest quality, and the lowest trades folks, jostling each other, without ceremony, hail-fellow well-met! . . . Right under the Pump-room windows is the King's Bath; a huge cistern, where you see the patients up to their necks in hot water. The ladies wear jackets and petticoats of brown linen [flannel?], with chip hats, in which they fix their handkerchiefs to wipe the sweat from their faces; but, truly, whether it is owing to the steam that surrounds them, or the heat of the water, or the nature of the dress, or to all these causes together, they look so flushed, and so frightful, that I always turn my eyes another way.'² [It must be conceded that Mrs. Tabitha Bramble, notwithstanding the extenuating attractions of a special cap with cherry-coloured ribbons, would certainly have looked peculiar.] . . . 'For my part,' continues Miss Liddy, 'I content myself with drinking about half-a-pint of the water every morning.'

After the Pump-room comes the ladies' coffee-house, from the politics, scandal, and philosophy of which Miss Melford is prudently excluded by her watchful aunt;

¹ Derrick was dead when 'Humphry Clinker' was written, having departed this life in March, 1769. According to Boswell, Johnson had a kindness for the little man, which did not extend to commendation of his very moderate literary abilities. In fact, it was concerning Derrick and another that the Doctor uttered his forcible, if somewhat unsavoury, *obiter dictum* as to the futility of discussing questions of precedence between infinitesimal insects.

² Here is the same scene under the broader handling of Smollett's forerunner, Anstey of the 'New Bath Guide'—

"Twas a glorious Sight to behold the Fair Sex
All wading with Gentlemen up to their Necks,
And view them so prettily tumble and sprawl
In a great smoaking Kettle as big as our Hall:
And To-Day many Persons of Rank and Condition
Were boil'd by Command of an able Physician.'

‘ Humphry Clinker ’

then the booksellers’ shops, with their circulating library (Sir Anthony Absolute’s ‘evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge’); after these, the milliners and toy-men, where are purchased the famous Bath rings of hair, as essentially Bath commodities as Bath buns, Bath brick, Bath chaps, or Bath coating; and lastly, the noted pastry-cook, Mr. Gill, to whom Anstey devotes an entire lyric:

‘ These are your true poetic Fires
That drest this sav’ry Grill,
E’en while I eat the Muse inspires,
And tunes my Voice to GILL.’

Across the water, opposite the Grove, there is the Spring Gardens, with its Long Room for breakfasting and dancing, and there is, moreover, the newly-licensed Theatre. But the chief attraction is the assembly-rooms for tea and cards and promenades, where twice a week the gentlemen give a ball, the jumbled respectabilities of which, and of other Bath public gatherings, afford infinite amusement to Miss Melford’s brother. ‘I was extremely diverted,’ he says, ‘last ball-night to see the Master of the Ceremonies leading, with great solemnity, to the upper end of the room, an antiquated Abigail, dressed in her lady’s cast-clothes, whom he (I suppose) mistook for some countess just arrived at the Bath. The ball was opened by a Scotch lord, with a mulatto heiress from St. Christopher’s; and the gay Colonel Tinsel danced all the evening with the daughter of an eminent tinman from the borough of Southwark.’ ‘Yesterday morning, at the Pump-room,’ he goes on, ‘I saw a broken-winded Wapping landlady squeeze through a circle of peers, to salute her brandy-merchant, who stood by the window, propp’d upon crutches; and a paralytic attorney of Shoe-lane, in shuffling up to the bar, kicked the shins of the chancellor of England, while his lordship, in a cut bob, drank a glass of water at the pump.’

Surveying these things with the distorted vision of an invalid, that *laudator temporis acti*, Mr. Bramble, finds matter to raise his spleen rather than his mirth. The Bath he had known thirty years before was wholly different

Eighteenth Century Studies

from this 'centre of racket and dissipation.' He has the gravest doubts of the curative properties of the waters, either for washing or drinking. He blasphemes the 'boasted improvements in architecture'; ridicules the poor approaches of the Circus; condemns the Crescent by anticipation; scoffs at the hackney chairs which stand soaking in the open street to the detriment of invalids, and, in fine, delivers himself of a general jeremiad over the hotchpot of buildings and the nondescript mob that crowds them.¹ Only one person is exempted from his dissatisfaction, and that is the well-known *bon-vivant* and Bath frequenter James Quin, who turns out to be an old friend. Mr. Bramble and the retired actor thoroughly agree in their criticism of life, which, according to Quin, would 'stink in his nostrils, if he did not steep it in claret.' As he is represented leaving his club at 'The Three Tuns,' a famous old coaching-house in Stall Street, with 'six good bottles under his belt,' it may be assumed that he religiously observes this precaution against misanthropy.² In the pages of Smollett, Quin, whom he probably knew, is pictured more amiably than elsewhere, being, indeed, described as 'one of the best bred men in the kingdom.' When he dines with Mr. Bramble he is regaled with his (and Fielding's) favourite John Dory, which, however, to his inconsolable chagrin, is cruelly mangled, and 'even presented without sauce.' It is better to be the guest of an epicure than to invite him to dinner.

¹ Walpole, who was at Bath in October, 1766, is no easier to please. 'Their new buildings [he says] that are so admired, look like a collection of little hospitals; the rest is detestable; and all crammed together, and surrounded with perpendicular hills that have no beauty.' He lodged in the once fashionable Chapel Court.

² Once Lord Chesterfield, seeing two chairmen hoisting a heavy gentleman into a sedan-chair, asked his servant who it was. 'Only Mr. Quin, my Lord, going home, as usual, from "The Three Tuns."' Whereupon his lordship remarked drily that Mr. Quin appeared to be taking one of the tuns with him under his waistcoat. Quin died at Bath in January, 1766. He is buried in the Abbey, and Garrick wrote his epitaph. His lodgings are supposed to have been in Pierrepont Street, as he left a legacy to the landlady of a house there. He also left fifty pounds to 'Mr. Thomas Gainsborough, Limner, now [1765] living at Bath,'—Gainsborough having painted his portrait.

‘ Humphry Clinker ’

From Bath, on May 20, Mr. Bramble starts in a hired coach-and-four for London; and it may be noted that the orthodox costume of a smart postilion was ‘a narrow-brimmed hat, with gold cording, a cut bob, a decent blue jacket, leather breeches, and a clean linen shirt, puffed above the waist band.’ On the edge of Marlborough Downs the coach is upset; but by the 24th they are safely housed in Mrs. Norton’s lodgings at Golden Square. The first thing that strikes Mr. Bramble is the enormous extension of London. ‘What I left open fields,’ he says, ‘producing hay and corn, I now find covered with streets, and squares, and palaces, and churches. I am credibly informed, that in the space of seven years, eleven thousand new houses have been built in one quarter of Westminster, exclusive of what is daily added to other parts of this unwieldy metropolis. Pimlico and Knightsbridge are almost joined to Chelsea and Kensington; and if this infatuation continues for half a century, I suppose the whole county of Middlesex will be covered with brick.’ He is pleased, however, with the new streets (they were then building Portman Square), and he is almost warm in his praises of the bridge at Blackfriars, which had recently been opened as a bridle-way. But he soon lapses into a digression on the subject so dear to Goldsmith, Johnson, and others of his contemporaries—the alleged depopulation of the villages, and the abnormal growth of the capital, which swells it, ‘like a dropsical head,’ at the expense of the body and extremities.

‘There are many causes,’ he says, in a graphic paragraph, ‘that contribute to the daily increase of this enormous mass; but they may be all resolved into the grand source of luxury and corruption. About five-and-twenty years ago, very few, even of the most opulent citizens of London, kept any equipage, or even any servants in livery. Their tables produced nothing but plain boiled and roasted, with a bottle of port and a tankard of beer. At present, every trader in any degree of credit, every broker and attorney, maintains a couple of footmen, a coachman, and postilion. He has his town-

Eighteenth Century Studies

house, and his country-house, his coach, and his postchaise. His wife and daughters appear in the richest stuffs, bespangled with diamonds. They frequent the court, the opera, the theatre, and the masquerade. They hold assemblies at their own houses: they make sumptuous entertainments, and treat with the richest wines of Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne. The substantial tradesman, who was wont to pass his evenings at the alehouse for fourpence half-penny, now spends three shillings at the tavern, while his wife keeps card-tables at home; she must likewise have fine clothes, her chaise, or pad, with country lodgings, and go three times a-week to public diversions. Every clerk, apprentice, and even waiter of tavern or coffee-house, maintains a gelding by himself, or in partnership, and assumes the air and apparel of a *petit-maître*. The gayest places of public entertainment are filled with fashionable figures; which, upon enquiry, will be found to be journeymen tailors, serving-men, and abigails, disguised like their betters.'

Making some allowance for the splenetic attitude of the writer, it would not be difficult, with a moderate expenditure of foot-note, to confirm this picture from contemporary playwrights and essayists. But it is less easy, in our days of steam and telegraphy, to realize another thing which strikes Mr. Bramble, and that is the headlong speed at which everything is done. 'The hackney-coachmen make their horses smoke, and the pavement shakes under them'; and he goes on to say that he has actually seen a waggon pass through Piccadilly at a hand-gallop. Qualities as intolerable to the peace-lover attach in his opinion to the amusements, where 'noise, confusion, glare, and glitter,' take the place of 'elegance and propriety.' Mr. Bramble's description of Ranelagh has often been quoted; but that of Vauxhall, which is coloured, or rather discoloured, by the fact that he was caught in a shower and had to take refuge in the Rotunda, is less familiar: 'Vauxhall is a composition of baubles, over-charged with paltry ornaments, ill-conceived, and poorly executed; without any unity of

‘ Humphry Clinker ’

design, or propriety of disposition. It is an unnatural assembly of objects, fantastically illuminated in broken masses, seemingly contrived to dazzle the eyes and divert the imagination of the vulgar. Here a wooden lion, there a stone statue; in one place, a range of things like coffee-house boxes, covered a-top; in another, a parcel of ale-houses benches; in a third, a puppet-show representation of a tin cascade [this, it is to be feared, must have been the famous Waterworks!]; in a fourth, a gloomy cave of a circular form, like a sepulchral vault half-lighted; in a fifth, a scanty slip of grass-plat, that would not afford pasture sufficient for an ass's colt. The walks, which nature seems to have intended for solitude, shade, and silence, are filled with crowds of noisy people, sucking up the nocturnal rheums of an aguish climate; and through these gay scenes, a few lamps glimmer like so many farthing candles.'

Although the atmosphere of the metropolis has materially altered for the worse, it is probable that, even in 1765, the last strictures as to its dangers at night-time, which are cynically developed in a further paragraph, were not ill-founded. For the rest, the modern admirers of old Vauxhall must console themselves by reflecting that the writer was none other than that 'learned Smelfungus' who had reviled the Venus de' Medici, and who declared the Pantheon (of Rome, not of London) to be nothing better than a 'huge cockpit.' Upon the present occasion Mr. Bramble confines his comments to the two great gardens. But from a letter of his niece, some of the party must also have visited the Assembly Rooms in Soho Square (Carlisle House) of the celebrated Mrs. Teresa Cornelys, who having not yet started the masquerades which inaugurated her ultimate collapse in the Fleet Prison, was still at the height of her popularity with persons of quality. Of other shows and amusements there are hints in the despatches of the remaining travellers. Mrs. Jenkins is escorted by Mr. Clinker to the ropedancing at Sadler's Wells, where there is such 'firing of pistols in the air, and blowing of trumpets, and swinging,

Eighteenth Century Studies

and rolling of wheelbarrows upon a wire, no thicker than a sewing-thread,' that she is like to have been frightened into a fit, notwithstanding that a fine gentleman came to 'comfit' her, and offered for to treat her with a 'pint of wind.' Then she goes with her mistress to see the wild beasts in the Tower. Finally (in Win's own words and spelling), they see 'the Park, and the paleass of Saint Gimses, and the king's and the queen's magisterial pursing, and the sweet young princes, and the hillyfents, and pye-bald ass, and all the rest of the royal family.' The piebald ass, it should be explained, was a beautiful female zebra which had been presented to Queen Charlotte, and usually grazed in a paddock in St. James's Park, close to old Buckingham House. It was an object of much public curiosity, as well as the pretext for some exceedingly scurrilous lampoons.¹

From one of Mr. Bramble's later letters he must have inspected the British Museum. At this date it was little more than an aggregation in Montague House of the Sloane, Cottonian, and Harleian collections, accessible only to small parties under vexatious restrictions, and limited, in respect of its library, to some forty thousand volumes. These—about a fortieth part of the present number—were apparently uncatalogued, for Mr. Bramble makes sundry sagacious remarks upon this subject which lead one to think that even he would have been satisfied with the present excellent arrangements for inquirers. Of other institutions he says nothing. His horror of crowds prevented him from visiting the theatre in the Haymarket, or we might have had his opinion of that popular mime, Mr. Samuel Foote. Towards the beginning of June we find him negotiating 'for a good travelling-coach and four, at a guinea a-day, for three months

¹ There is a picture of the zebra in the 'London Magazine,' for July, 1762; and Lady Mary Coke in January, 1767, speaks of going 'with a great party to see the Queen's Elephants.' Mention is also made of these royal favourites in the 'Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers, Knight,' 1773:

'In some fair island will we turn to grass
(With the Queen's leave) her elephant and ass.'

‘Humphry Clinker’

certain,’ to start on the northward journey. The party leave Golden Square on the 15th, and on the 23rd, after much jolting on the bad roads between Newark and Wetherby, they reach Harrogate. Here is Jerry Melford’s description of that fashionable watering-place as it appeared in 1766:

‘Harrigate-water, so celebrated for its efficacy in the scurvy and other distempers, is supplied from a copious spring, in the hollow of a wild common, round which a good many houses have been built for the convenience of the drinkers, though few of them are inhabited. Most of the company lodge at some distance, in five separate inns, situated in different parts of the common, from whence they go every morning to the well, in their own carriages. The lodgers of each inn form a distinct society, that eat together; and there is a commodious public room, where they breakfast in dishabille, at separate tables, from eight o’clock till eleven, as they chance or choose to come in. Here also they drink tea in the afternoon, and play at cards or dance in the evening. One custom, however, prevails, which I look upon as a solecism in politeness. The ladies treat with tea in their turns; and even girls of sixteen are not exempted from this shameful imposition. There is a public ball by subscription every night at one of the houses, to which all the company from the others are admitted by tickets; and, indeed, Harrigate treads upon the heels of Bath, in the articles of gaiety and dissipation—with this difference, however, that here we are more sociable and familiar. One of the inns is already full up to the very garrets, having no less than fifty lodgers, and as many servants. Our family does not exceed thirty-six, and I should be sorry to see the number augmented, as our accommodations won’t admit of much increase.’

‘Mr. Bramble’s verdict does not differ greatly from this; although he highly disapproves the Harrogate water, which some people say ‘smells of rotten eggs,’ and others liken to ‘the scourings of a foul gun.’ He himself defines it as bilge-water, pure and simple. After an attempt to

Eighteenth Century Studies

apply it externally in the form of a hot bath, he becomes so ill that he is obliged to start, *viâ* York, to Scarborough, in order to brace his exhausted fibres by sea-bathing. York Minster gives him opportunity for a discourse upon the comfortless and ill-ventilated condition of places of worship in general; and he leaves Scarborough (the then new-fashioned bathing-machines of which are described with some minuteness by Jerry Melford) in consequence of an unfortunate mistake made by Humphry, who, seeing his master 'dipping,' imagines him to be drowning, and thereupon rescues him with more vigour than dexterity. The travellers then proceeded by Whitby and Stockton to Durham, where they first meet the redoubtable Lieutenant Lismahago. Mr. Bramble's account of the city of Durham as 'a confused heap of stones and brick, accumulated so as to cover a mountain, round which a river winds its brawling course,' is, like his astounding comparison of York Minster and its spire to a criminal impaled, entirely in the 'Smelfungus' manner. From Durham, through Newcastle, Morpeth, and Alnwick, they go northward to Berwick. Beyond the fact that at Newcastle Mrs. Tabitha and her maid, with Humphry, attend Wesley's meeting (doubtless at the famous Orphan House he had founded in 1742), and that poor Win is subsequently decoyed by Jerry's valet into accompanying him to the play, in rouge, 'with her hair dressed in the Parish fashion'—an exhibition which leads to her being mobbed by the colliers as a 'painted Issabel'—nothing of interest is recorded. But Mr. Bramble's heart shows signs of softening as he nears Smollett's native land; and already he notices with complacency that the Scotch side of the Tweed is far more populous and far better cultivated than the English border.

Passing forward by Dunbar and Haddington they arrive at Musselburgh, where, in a house which was still standing in the days of Paterson's history of the place, Smollett (or rather Mr. Bramble) drinks tea with an old friend, Commissioner Cardonnel. Then, along the smooth sand of the shore, they get to Edinburgh, where, after brief

‘ Humphry Clinker ’

experience of a miserable inn, they find lodgings ‘ with a widow gentlewoman, of the name of Lockhart,’ up four pair of stairs in the many-storied High Street. Mr. Bramble’s impressions of the High Street and the Canon-gate, at this time disfigured by the straggling Lucken-booths which were removed in 1817, are not especially notable; but from his account of the water-supply of eighteenth-century Edinburgh, and of its sanitary arrangements in general, it would appear that its nickname of ‘ Auld Reekie ’ was not undeserved:

‘ The water is brought in leaden pipes from a mountain in the neighbourhood, to a cistern on the Castle-hill, from whence it is distributed to public conduits in different parts of the city. From these it is carried in barrels, on the backs of male and female porters, up two, three, four, five, six, seven, and eight pair of stairs, for the use of particular families. Every story is a complete house, occupied by a separate family; and the stair, being common to them all, is generally left in a very filthy condition. . . . Nothing can form a stronger contrast, than the difference betwixt the outside and inside of the door; for the good-women of this metropolis are remarkably nice in the ornaments and propriety of their apartments, as if they were resolved to transfer the imputation from the individual to the public. You are no stranger to their method of discharging all their impurities from their windows, at a certain hour of the night, as the custom is in Spain, Portugal, and some parts of France and Italy, a practice to which I can by no means be reconciled; for notwithstanding all the care that is taken by their scavengers to remove this nuisance every morning by break of day, enough still remains to offend the eyes, as well as other organs of those whom use has not hardened against all delicacy of sensation.’

The valetudinarian who had fainted in the bad air of the Bath Pump-room may perhaps be regarded as abnormally sensitive, although his report is very circumstantially confirmed by Winifred Jenkins. But even two years after ‘ Humphry Clinker ’ had been published, this

Eighteenth Century Studies

evil remained unmitigated, for Mr. James Boswell, piloting Dr. Samuel Johnson up the High Street on a dusky night, confessed himself unable to prevent his illustrious friend from being assailed by the evening effluvia of Edinburgh. 'Sir, I smell you in the dark'—grumbled the Great Man in his companion's ear; and his companion admits ruefully that 'a zealous Scotchman would have wished Mr. Johnson to be without one of his five senses upon this occasion.' Nevertheless, the Doctor (while holding his nose) commended the breadth of the thoroughfare and the imposing height of the houses.

In that 'hotbed of genius,' the Scottish capital, Mr. Bramble's party were so 'caressed and feasted' that, although their degenerate southern stomachs refused to retain or even receive such national dainties as 'haggis,' and 'sing'd sheep's head,' the record takes an unusually favourable note. They go to the amateur concerts in St. Cecilia's Hall in the Cowgate; they go to the Hunters' Ball at Holyrood, one of the belles of which was Smollett's connection, Miss Eleonora Renton; they attend the Leith races, where they find far better company than at Doncaster or Newmarket; and they inspect, on the Leith Links, the devotees of that game of golf, of which the fascination, like Hope, seems to spring eternal in the human breast. 'I was shown one particular set of golfers,' says Jerry Melford, 'the youngest of whom was turned of fourscore. They were all gentlemen of independent fortunes, who had amused themselves with this pastime for the best part of a century, without having ever felt the least alarm from sickness or disgust; and they never went to bed, without having each the best part of a gallon of claret in his belly.' Mr. Melford also gives an account, too long to be quoted, of a very singular festival—to wit, a caddies', or cawdies' (errand porters'), dinner and ball, which, as related, a little recalls the 'Jolly Beggars' of Burns, as well as that curious entertainment which Steele had given in the same city some forty years before.

From Edinburgh—part of their latter stay at which was diversified by a trip in a fishing-boat across the Firth

‘ Humphry Clinker ’

to Fife, where they visit among other things that ‘ skeleton of a venerable city,’ St. Andrews ‘ by the northern sea,’ a considerable amount of which element they ship in making Leith Pier on their return—they depart in August for Loch Lomond, taking Stirling and Glasgow on the way. For Glasgow (which, no doubt, had wonderfully progressed since the days of the author’s apprenticeship there in 1738), Mr. Bramble, whom the hospitalities of Edinburgh seem to have transformed into an optimist, expresses great admiration. Edinburgh had been well enough, but Glasgow is the ‘ pride of Scotland,’ ‘ one of the most flourishing towns in Great Britain,’ ‘ one of the prettiest towns in Europe,’ and so forth. Thence they travel along the Clyde to Dumbarton, cross Leven Water, and so reach Mr. Commissioner Smollett’s oak-bosomed house of Cameron at the south-western extremity of the loch. If Mr. Bramble has hitherto been laudatory, over the Arcadia of the North he is enthusiastic—certainly more enthusiastic than either Johnson or Wordsworth in similar circumstances. But Wordsworth was mentally comparing Dumbartonshire with his beloved Westmoreland; and Johnson was not, like Smollett, writing of his natal neighbourhood.

‘ I have seen,’ says the last-named, ‘ the Lago di Garda, Albano, De Vico, Bolsena, and Geneva, and, upon my honour, I prefer Lough-Lomond to them all; a preference which is certainly owing to the verdant islands that seem to float upon its surface, affording the most enchanting objects of repose to the excursive view. Nor are the banks destitute of beauties, which even partake of the sublime. On this side they display a sweet variety of woodland, corn-field, and pasture, with several agreeable villas emerging as it were out of the lake, till, at some distance, the prospect terminates in huge mountains covered with heath, which being in the bloom, affords a very rich covering of purple. Everything here is romantic beyond imagination. . . . What say you to a natural basin of pure water, near thirty miles long, and in some places seven miles broad, and in many above a hundred

Eighteenth Century Studies

fathom deep, having four and twenty habitable islands, some of them stocked with deer, and all of them covered with wood; containing immense quantities of delicious fish, salmon, pike, trout, perch, flounders, eels, and powans, the last a delicate kind of fresh-water herring, peculiar to this lake; and finally communicating with the sea, by sending off the Leven, through which all those species (except the powan) make their exit and entrance occasionally?'

After this may come the less critical additions of Winifred Jenkins, who describes 'Loff-Loming' as a 'wonderful sea of fresh water, with a power of hylands in the midst on't. They say as how it has got ne'er a bottom, and was made by a musician; and, truly, I believe it; for it is not in the course of nature. It has got *waves without wind, fish without fins, and a floating hyland*; and one of them is a crutch-yard, where the dead are buried; and always before the person dies, a bell rings of itself to give warning.'

But it is time to abridge the account of Mr. Bramble's wanderings. Before his return southward he makes an excursion with his nephew into Western Argyllshire and the islands of Isla, Jura, Mull, and Icolmkill, 'tarrying at various castles of the West Highland sub-chieftains and gentry.' On the way south the party go out of their road to Drumlanrig, the seat of the Duke of Queensberry, and are hospitably entreated by his Duchess, 'Prior's Kitty.' They visit Manchester, Chatsworth, the Peak, and Buxton; and so, by easy stages, return in the month of October to Wales and Brambleton House. The invention of the book never flags, but the latter pages are necessarily much occupied in clearing the ground for the marriages which bring it to a close.

Smollett scarcely takes rank as a poet, in spite of the 'Tears of Caledonia' or 'The Storm that howls along the sky' in the 'Handbook of Quotations.' But towards the end of 'Humphry Clinker' he inserted one of the most pleasing specimens of his occasional efforts, the 'Ode to Leven Water,' on the very banks of which—'*in ipsius*

‘ Humphry Clinker ’

Levinæ ripis ’—fifty-one years before, he had been born. At Renton, beside the Leven—now, alas! no longer famed for its ‘transparent wave’—rises the stately Tuscan column which Smollett of Bonhill erected to the memory of his gifted but combative cousin, who, like Fielding, found a last resting-place under alien skies. The long Latin inscription on this monument—the joint production of George Stewart and Ramsay of Ochtertyre—had the honour of being revised by Johnson, who, we are told, ridiculed the suggestion of Lord Kames that English was preferable. ‘It would be a disgrace to Dr. Smollett,’ he said, using much the same argument as he employed two years later with regard to the epitaph of Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey; and Boswell, the compliant, followed suit by adding that Smollett’s admirers would probably be equal to Latin, and that the inscription was not intended to be understood by Highland drovers. A passage in the Memoir of Thomas Bewick, the engraver, supplies an odd foot-note to Boswell. Making his way in 1776 up the Leven from Dumbarton to Loch Lomond, Bewick paused to puzzle out the words on the pedestal, as Smollett was an author whom he ‘almost adored.’ But he must have gone on his way unenlightened had it not been for the opportune scholarship of a passing Highlander.

JOHNSON'S LIBRARY

‘THERE are my friends;—there are my books, to which I have not yet bid farewell.’ Thus Johnson—writing in the last months of his life to Dr. Brocklesby from Lichfield—speaks of the London that he loved so dearly. He loved his books dearly too. But his attachment for them, like his attachment for his friends, was after all but a growling kind of affection, not incompatible with much severe discipline and no small amount of rough usage. Whether he would actually have marked his place with the countless straws (*‘paleas innumeras’*) of the slovenly student in the ‘Philobiblon,’ or—as is related of another even more unpardonable amateur—set the leg of a chair on a volume to keep it open, may in charity be doubted. What is certain is, that he would not scruple to cut the leaves with a greasy knife, and read while he was eating (one knows how he eat!); and it is probable that with his imperfect sight, his haste to ‘tear out the heart’ of his subject, and his frequent fits of absence or abstraction, he was not in the least the kind of person to whom one would have cared to confide the masterpieces of Miss Prideaux or Mr. Cobden-Sanderson, even though, out of abundance of caution, he should cuddle them uncouthly in a corner of the tablecloth, as he once did with Charles Sheridan’s ‘Revolution in Sweden.’ ‘David!’ he said to Garrick, ‘will you lend me your “Petrarca”?’ (Petrarch, it may be remembered, had been the passion of his boyhood.) And Garrick answering doubtfully ‘Y—e—s, Sir!’ was greeted with a reproachful ‘David! you sigh?’—the obvious outcome of which was that the treasure, ‘stupendously bound,’ and no doubt containing the famous Shakespeare book-plate with its cautionary motto from the ‘Ménagiana,’ found its way that very evening into

Johnson's Library

Johnson's keeping. 'He received it,' reported Boswell, who happened to be present, 'with a Greek ejaculation and a couplet or two from "Horace";' and then—in one of those transports of enthusiasm which seemed to require that (like Dominie Sampson) he should spread his arms aloft—poor Garrick's 'Petrarca,' 'stupendously bound,' pounced over his head upon the floor, to be forthwith forgotten in the train of thought to which it had given birth. Can it be wondered that Garrick, a precise, natty man, with the ambitions, if not the instincts, of a connoisseur, and a punctilious respect for externals, should hesitate to lend his priceless 'old plays' to such a reader—a reader who, moreover, if he made show of religiously registering his obligations, seldom carried his good resolutions so far as to return the books he borrowed, although—like Coleridge later—he usually enriched them liberally with unsolicited *marginalia*? When a man deals thus with the property of his friends, he cannot be expected to spare his own; and it may easily be believed that Johnson's collection, based, no doubt, on works originally brought together for the preparation of the 'Dictionary,' was, as described, 'by no means handsome in its appearance.' Nor, though he was discovered, on more than one occasion, in hedger's gloves and a cloud of his own raising, vaguely endeavouring to impart 'Heaven's first law' into his library by vigorously 'buffeting' the unfortunate volumes together, could those volumes be said to be, in any sense, either well cared for or well kept. 'He has many good books, but they are all lying in confusion and dust,' wrote Boswell to Temple in 1763; and Hawkins reports further that they were 'miserably ragged' and 'defaced,' and 'chosen with so little regard to editions or their external appearance, as shewed they were intended for use, and that he disdained the ostentation of learning.' That they grew to be fairly numerous is nevertheless clear from the auction catalogue drawn up in 1785 after their owner's death.

Until very recently, this catalogue of Mr. Christie, at whose 'Great Room in Pall Mall' the sale took place, was

Eighteenth Century Studies

comparatively inaccessible. The Bodleian, we believe, possesses a copy; and another was discovered by Mr. Peter Cunningham; while a third, which had belonged to the Rev. Samuel Lysons, the antiquary, was sold at Puttick's in November, 1881, with the books of a well-known collector, Col. F. Grant, being bound up in a volume containing other valuable Johnsoniana which Lysons had collected. As late as June, 1892, however, a *facsimile*—which, as it was limited to 150 copies, should speedily become rare—was reprinted by Messrs. Unwin for the meeting of the Johnson Club at Oxford. It forms a pamphlet of twenty-eight pages, and (engravings not included) 650 'lots', representing of course a much larger number of volumes; and it is entitled 'A Catalogue of the Valuable Library of Books, of the late learned Samuel Johnson, Esq; LL.D., Deceased.' The sale was to take place on Wednesday, February 16th, 1785, and the three following days. That it could not have comprised the whole of the Doctor's possessions is clear from the fact that, in his will, he left some of the more important volumes to friends. Reynolds, for instance, was to have the great French Dictionary of Martinière, as well as Johnson's own copy of his 'folio English Dictionary, of the last revision'; Hawkins was to have Holinshed, Stowe, the 'Annales Ecclesiastici' of Baronius, and 'an octavo Common Prayer-Book'; Langton, a Polyglot Bible; Windham, the Greek Heroic Poets. Other persons indicated were also to select a book; and this may perhaps account for some conspicuous absences from Mr. Christie's pages. They include the unworshipful 'little Pompadour,' the translation of which Johnson indicated to Strahan in 1759 as the model for the *format* of 'Rasselas'; but they do not include 'Rasselas' itself. They contain Goldsmith's 'Citizen of the World' and 'Roman History,' but they show no sign of 'She Stoops to Conquer,' a masterpiece dedicated by Goldsmith to his friend, of a copy of which that friend might reasonably be supposed to have died possessed. This is the more remarkable because Johnson had certainly preserved Francklin's 'Lucian,' Wilson's

Johnson's Library

'Archæological Dictionary,' and several other efforts by authors far less able than 'Doctor *Minor*' who had inscribed to him their performances. The difficulty, however, disappears if we assume 'Rasselas' and the rest, to have been selected by the persons named in the will, who, as Boswell is careful to acquaint us, prevented any 'curious question as to the order of choice' by luckily fixing upon different books. One of these mementoes, being that which fell to the lot of Cruikshank, the famous surgeon of Leicester Fields by whom Johnson was attended in his last illness, the present writer is fortunate enough to possess. It is a copy of Dr. Samuel Clarke's edition of 'Homer,' 1740-54, four volumes 4to in two; and it bears, at foot of the title-page, the words—'Property of W^m. Cruikshank in consequence of the Will or Testament of Dr. Samuel Johnson.' Boswell records but one quotation made by the Doctor from this edition of the author 'whom he venerated as the prince of poets,' and that is in no wise textual; but he says that at the close of Johnson's life (and a little to the astonishment of his friends, since Clarke was not considered orthodox) he was frequently employed in reading Clarke's 'Sermons,' which he also fervently recommended to Dr. Brocklesby as 'fullest on the propitiatory sacrifice.' It is therefore not surprising that there are two sets of the 'Sermons' in the Catalogue.

Bibliographical rarities, real or fictitious, do not figure largely in Mr. Christie's pamphlet. Only one work is described as 'elegantly bound,' and that is a Leipsic edition of the 'Journey to the Western Islands'; one only is characterized as 'very scarce,' and that is Dr. Percy's 'Earl of Northumberland's Household Book,' of which Walpole had a copy in the library at Strawberry. What is ostensibly a first *folio* of Shakespeare is chronicled at p. 21, but the '1623' is plainly a misprint for '1632,' such being the date of that second *folio* which, at Theobald's death, and, it is to be presumed, *before* the historical assault, was presented to Johnson by Osborn the book-seller. Theobald had made many manuscript notes; Johnson made more; and the volume in which the first

Eighteenth Century Studies

hero of the 'Dunciad' and the author of 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' so curiously collaborate, passed to the collection of Sir Henry Irving, who bought it at the Aylesford sale of 1888. Not very far from the Shakespeare in the Catalogue is a Gerarde's 'Herball' of 1633, which, according to the author of 'Gossip in a Library,' is 'the right edition' of Gerarde, whose editor and continuator, by the way, was also a Johnson, having Thomas to his Christianname, 'citizen and apothecary of London.' Among the remaining *folios* on the same page is Burton's 'Anatomie,' the only work which, the good Doctor protested, 'ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise.' This, which was bound up with Sir Matthew Hale's 'Primitive Origination of Mankind,' 1677, is the issue of 1676; and the volume now forms part of the material for that gigantic enterprise at present in progress at Oxford under the guiding hand of Sir J. A. H. Murray. An inscription which it bears affirms it to have been bought at Johnson's sale by one William Collins. It was afterwards presented to the Philological Society in 1863 by a subsequent owner, and so passed into the Sunnyside arsenal of authorities.¹ The Hale part of the volume is freely embellished by the lines and marks, described by Boswell and others, with which Johnson prepared quotations for transcription. Sometimes there are marginal comments, of which the following is cited by Dr. Birkbeck Hill. According to Hale—'Averroes says that if the world were not eternal . . . it could never have been at all, because an eternal duration must necessarily have anteceded the first production of the world.' Opposite to this Johnson has written, 'This argument will hold good equally against the writing that I now write.' If we turn to the 'Dictionary' we shall find that he uses another sentence from Hale as an illustration of the unusual word 'antecede.'

At p. 14 is the little 'Hudibras' (1726), with 'first impressions' of the plates which Hogarth is supposed to

¹ We are indebted for these particulars to the courtesy of Sir J. A. H. Murray himself.

Johnson's Library

have adapted from the vagabond painter and tavern-haunter, Francis Lepipre, and which he afterwards so much surpassed by his own inventions; ¹ lower down there is the 'Perspective' of Brook Taylor by Joshua Kirby, with Hogarth's quaint pictorial preachment upon the perils which environ the adventurous in that art. There is a copy of Cheyne's 'English Malady'; there are works of Mead, and Cheselden the anatomist:

'I'll do what MEAD and CHESOLDEN advise,
To keep these limbs, and to preserve these eyes.'

There is a copy of the 'Medicinal Dictionary' of Dr. Robert James of the Fever Powder (3 vols. *folio*), for which Johnson, besides contributing several of the articles, prepared the judicious dedication 'To Dr. Mead,' which, according to Boswell, was so excellently calculated 'to conciliate the patronage of that very eminent man'; there is also another book in which—to use old Thomas Heywood's figure—he had certainly, if not 'an entire hand, at least a main finger,' the Brumoy's 'Greek Theatre' of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, whose translation of Sully's 'Memoirs' is included in the collection. Among biographies, there is the 'Gustavus Adolphus' of Philip Stanhope's tutor, Dr. Walter Harte—that melancholy failure, to escape the expected overpowering success of which its too-sanguine author sought the retirement of the country; among histories, there is Macaulay's 'England' (2 vols.), which reads like an anachronism. But it is, of course, the forgotten performance of the egregious lady once known as 'the celebrated female historian.' And it must, moreover, have been a presentation copy, for Johnson, who frankly admitted that he had never taken the trouble to read the book, would hardly have bought it, even if he had not detested the writer. She rouged; and she was a red Republican; and 'A never could abide carnations.'

¹ According to Wright, this copy, having Johnson's signature, and dated Aug. 1747, passed into the collection of Mr. Upcott. Mr. Upcott also possessed two volumes of the proof sheets of the 'Lives of the Poets,' which are now in the Forster Collection at South Kensington.

Eighteenth Century Studies

Theology, as may perhaps be anticipated, is largely represented by other books besides Clarke's 'Sermons'; and there is a goodly array of authorities upon the Doctor's hobby of chemistry, a taste which had lasted from his life of Boerhaave in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' down to the days of that laboratory at Streatham, in which he terrified the Thrale family circle by the temerity of his experiments. There are naturally numerous works on language and etymology; there is also an abundance of Greek and Latin *folios* and *quartos*, including the 'Macrobius' he had quoted with such excellent effect upon his first arrival at Pembroke College. There are many books by authors whose names are familiar in the pages of Boswell: Reynolds' 'Discourses,' Grainger's 'Tibullus,' Hoole's 'Ariosto,' Nichols' 'Anecdotes of Bowyer,' Carter's 'Epictetus,' etc. But, upon the whole, it must be presumed, as Boswell suggests, that it was a desire to possess a relic of Dr. Johnson, rather than a desire to possess the books themselves, which prompted the majority of the purchasers. In any case, the sum realized, £247 9s., does not appear to have been regarded by the late owner's contemporaries as an unusually unsatisfactory amount. Why the sale itself attracted so little public attention is not easy to explain. Beyond a trivial epigram in the 'Public Advertiser,' where it was announced *once*, it seems to have been wholly ignored by the press. In the 'Gentleman's Magazine' there is no mention of it, nor is it noticed in any way by Johnson's favourite news-sheet, the 'London Chronicle.'

LADY MARY COKE

WHEN, in Scott's 'Heart of Mid Lothian,' Jeanie Deans, having obtained her sister's pardon, repairs to Argyll House, in order to go northward with the ducal establishment, she is formally presented by John, Duke of Argyll and Greenwich, to his Duchess and her daughters. The only member of the family who takes any prominent part in the interview is a lively young lady of twelve, who 'chaffs' her noble father about Sheriffmuir with considerable vivacity, and gets her hair pulled for her pains. The young lady referred to grew up to be Lady Mary Coke, a part of whose letters and very curious journal was privately printed not long ago in three bulky volumes. How she looked as a girl, Sir Walter does not tell us; but her portrait at six and thirty by Allan Ramsay, a copy of which is to be found at the beginning of volume the first, gives an excellent idea of what she became in later life.¹ It shows us a graceful figure dressed in a white satin that would have delighted Terburg, and leaning upon such a tall theorbo as you may see in the cases at South Kensington. It is in fact taller than she is herself; and she is not small. On the contrary, she must have been what that eminent connoisseur, Mrs. Colonel James in 'Amelia,' would have described as 'a very fine Person of a Woman.' She has an elegant shape and a beautiful neck and arm, and, in the picture, might very easily pass for a beauty. But her complexion, which in her old age grew cadaverous, was always of a dead white; and the absence of well-defined brows is said to have lent a certain fierceness to her dark eyes. One can, however, conceive that, with her fair hair and stately carriage, she must have looked

¹ The original picture is in the possession of Lord Bute at Mountstuart. There is a fine mezzotint of it by McArdell. From a passage in Lady Mary's 'Journal' for January, 1771, it appears that the prints were sometimes coloured by hand.

Eighteenth Century Studies

extremely well in the travelling costume of pea-green and silver in which Horace Walpole met her at Amiens, and with which she subsequently astonished the sober burghers of Nuremberg and Aix.

Until a year or two ago, Lady Mary Coke was little more than a wandering name. Scott's reference to her as a girl, and a few passages in Walpole's 'Letters,' Swinburne's 'Courts of Europe,' and the like, made up the sum of the record. Then, in 1863, was printed privately the admirable account, by Lord Bute's youngest daughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, of John, Duke of Argyll, and his family. Lady Louisa Stuart was one of those writers whose silence is a positive misfortune to the literature of the Memoir. Living to a great age, for she died in 1851 at ninety-four, she had accumulated a store of memories, and she had inspected life with the keenest perceptions and with unusual advantages of position. But like Lord Chesterfield, the Duke of Nivernais, and some others of the *ancien régime*, she had an old-world prejudice against the undignified publicities of type, and her literary performances consist mainly of manuscript statements, prepared for her relatives, concerning persons or occurrences which had come within her cognizance. It was she who wrote the introduction to Lord Wharncliffe's edition of the letters of her grandmother, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu — an introduction which sparkles with unpublished eighteenth-century anecdote of the most brilliant character, and she contributed many of the more interesting notes to the Selwyn Correspondence. Several epistles from her pen are included in the recently issued edition of Scott's letters; and her account of the Argylls, which extends to one hundred and twenty pages, and which was drawn up in 1827, has now been once more privately printed by its present owner, the Earl of Home, as a preface to Lady Mary Coke's 'Letters and Journal.' This composition is, we should imagine, Lady Louisa's masterpiece. Although we have it on the authority of Voltaire that 'il ne faut point d'esprit pour s'occuper de vieux événements,' he would probably have admitted that

Lady Mary Coke

they were none the worse for some admixture of that 'ingredian,' as Lady Mary Coke spells the word, and of everything that a superabundance of *esprit* can lend to narrative, Lady Louisa's pen has been prodigal. Her sketch of 'Ian Roy,' of his homely duchess, and of his four shrill-voiced daughters, is one of the brightest and pleasantest pieces of writing which it has been our good fortune to read, and it is not too much to say that, in some respects, Lady Louisa could give points even to that inimitable gossip Horace Walpole himself.

Distinguished at once in War and Statecraft,—for was he not Pope's Argyll, born to 'shake alike the Senate and the Field'?—Lady Mary Coke's father had not been equally fortunate in Love. In his green youth he made the old conventional alliance of pedigree and pence with a rich citizen's daughter for whom he cared but little. The ill-matched pair promptly separated, and the Duke's martial employments left him but scant opportunity for the further cultivation, in favourable circumstances, of what Steele calls the 'Beautiful Sex.' Yet, by a strange chance, no sooner had he retired from active life than he became the object of a respectful and sentimental admiration on the part of one of Queen Caroline's maids of honour. Stranger still, he returned the compliment by what gradually grew into a most durable attachment. Miss Jane Warburton, as the lady was named, was well-born and good-humoured; but she was neither handsome nor clever, and, moreover, was so countrified, ignorant, and awkward as to be 'the standing jest of her companions in office.' Yet the affection with which she inspired 'red John of Argyll' was unmistakable; and his first wife was no sooner under the ground than, very much to the surprise of the Court quidnuncs, he at once proposed to make Jenny Warburton Duchess of Argyll. She obliged him to wait six months, and then became his wife. To the outsider, the union was not one which promised ideal happiness, and yet something very like ideal happiness was achieved. 'To say the Duke of Argyll proved an excellent husband would be speaking poorly: he remained

Eighteenth Century Studies

throughout life a faithful, doating, adoring lover.' These are Lady Louisa Stuart's words; and they are the more significant because this devotion seems to have survived one of the greatest disappointments to which a man in the Duke's position could be subjected, the non-appearance of a son. 'Daughter perversely followed daughter, to the number of five (one dying a child); and his hopes, often renewed, regularly ended in fresh mortification—not the less bitter because Lord Islay [the Duke's brother, with whom he disagreed] was his presumptive heir.' The eldest daughter, Lady Caroline, married the Earl of Dalkeith; the second, Lady Anne, the Earl of Strafford; the third, Lady Elizabeth, her cousin Mr. Stuart Mackenzie; while the fourth became the wife of Lord Leicester's son, and is the Lady Mary Coke of this paper.

Of each of the four sisters Lady Louisa Stuart gives a sufficient account, but the bulk of her memories is naturally devoted to 'that extraordinary person,' the youngest. Lady Mary's childhood seems to have yielded but few anecdotes; and of these the chief, if it is scarcely flattering to her, is far more discreditable to her father. He used, it seems, to amuse himself by putting her 'in a fury, crying, "Look! look at Mary!" when she flew like a little tigress, screaming, scratching and tearing; then, after laughing heartily, he would finish the improving lesson by coaxing her with sugar-plums to kiss and be friends.' Under such an educational system, it is perhaps scarcely to be wondered that she grew up with the reputation of being self-willed and unmanageable; and there is in truth every evidence that—to misuse a phrase of Herrick—she was a distinctly 'tempestuous petticoat.' In general ability she was in advance of her sisters; and, in a hard unsympathetic way, made certain pretensions to what would now be called culture. Her personal attractions, as already implied, were considerable, though she was not as beautiful as Lady Strafford. With many definite good qualities, as sincerity, humour, good nature, and some measure of generosity, 'her understanding [in the uncompromising words of her

Lady Mary Coke

biographer] lay smothered under so much pride, self-conceit, prejudice, obstinacy, and violence of temper, that you knew not where to look for it, and seldom indeed did you catch such a distinct view of it as certified its existence.' This is a sweeping indictment, to which it is further added that 'nothing ever happened to her after the fashion of ordinary life.' Her friendships, her experiences, her ailments, her estrangements, her emotions, her misfortunes, real and fictitious, had all this peculiarity—they were unprecedented and unique. Such a disposition and endowments foreshadow remarkable developments. In a humbler condition of life these would probably have been of a sensational kind; and, in a modified form, they were not wanting even to this exalted person of quality.

In 1743 the Duke of Argyll died of paralysis, leaving his youngest daughter still unmarried. To the fact that he also left her £20,000 must no doubt be attributed the speedy appearance of an applicant for her hand in the person of Viscount Coke, the Earl of Leicester's son. Neither son nor father bore remarkably good characters. But Lord Coke contrived to conciliate the scruples of the Duchess, and Lady Mary clenched the question by announcing authoritatively that she was prepared to accept him. Having gone so far, however, by a sudden caprice she changed her tactics, and throughout the prolonged engagement that followed, proceeded to subject her admirer to all the disdain and aversion with which the 'scornful ladies' of Restoration comedy are wont to discipline their lovers. As she was too good a match to be surrendered lightly to any matrimonial 'gentleman of the road,' Lord Coke managed to dissemble his indignation at this treatment. But being, on his side, as unscrupulous as he was proud, he waited until the marriage-knot had been securely tied, and then insultingly left his wife at the church door to her maiden reflections. Lady Mary, transformed by this *coup de Jarnac* from a 'scornful lady' to a 'woman scorned,' and being moreover a person of decision, promptly retaliated by obstinately maintain-

Eighteenth Century Studies

ing the position by which it had only been intended to punish her for a time. To the dismay of her friends and father-in-law, she persisted in continuing a wife only in name; and her husband, nothing loth, went back to his bachelor distractions. Then the dread of losing an heir to the succession converted Lord Leicester into a tyrant, and, on both sides, family feeling became embittered. Sympathizing relatives swelled the contention, Lady Mary posing as an injured martyr, Lord Leicester and her husband cajoling and threatening by turns. Finally, after she had been practically imprisoned at Holkham for six months, Lord Coke was summoned to produce her before the King's Bench, where she at once swore the peace against him, and, upon the ground of ill-usage, instituted a suit for divorce. This, for obscure reasons, among which must be reckoned her own palpable exaggeration of her wrongs, fell through, but she was eventually permitted to live with her mother unmolested, until at last, and luckily not very long after, Lord Coke's excesses solved her difficulties, by making her a widow at six and twenty.

When—quitting the mourning which, being a person of the nicest possible decorum, she wore punctiliously for her departed lord—Lady Mary re-entered society, it was not without a certain *prestige*. By many, who accepted her own version of the circumstances, she was genuinely pitied, and there is always an element of interest attaching to a young and high-born widow, especially when she is mistress of an income which, in these days, would amount to about £5000 per annum. But Love, said those who knew her best, had absolutely no place in Lady Mary Coke's composition; and, although she had other admirers, none of them ever developed into a husband. At thirty it was supposed that she might marry that cynosure of so many eighteenth-century ladies of quality, Lord March (afterwards the notorious 'Old Q.'), but his lordship, if ever in earnest, appears to have speedily cried off, and in truth his openly profligate life offered but doubtful assurance of domestic happiness. After this,

Lady Mary Coke

Lady Mary deliberately followed her own inclination, which was to connect herself directly or indirectly with the Court. She managed to establish close friendly relations both with George II.'s daughter, Princess Amelia, and with his mistress, Lady Yarmouth. She even professed to have a *tendre* for one of those 'good-humoured asses,' as their aunt called them, the Royal dukes, choosing for her special adoration that chattering and 'mealy-faced boy' of twenty, Edward, Duke of York, who to his other qualities added that of being a notorious flirt and *farceur*. The attachment, on the lady's side of the most high-flown and superfine description, afforded great amusement to the Royal Family, and also, it is hinted, to the 'object' himself, by whom it seems to have been regarded as an excellent joke. Letters, however, frequently passed between the pair, in one of which the Prince paid Lady Mary the compliment of comparing her to Queen Elizabeth, a simile not perhaps very lover-like, but singularly palatable to the person addressed. She, no doubt, fully believed herself destined to the good fortune of Lady Waldegrave and Mrs. Horton; and her claims of birth were certainly infinitely superior. All these day-dreams, however, were rudely dispersed by the Prince's premature departure from this world—a catastrophe which furnished Lady Mary with a lifelong grievance, to which, in a few years, was added the supplementary mortifications of the marriage of the Duke of Cumberland and the avowal of the long-concealed union of the Duke of Gloucester.

His Royal Highness Edward, Duke of York, died at Monaco in 1767. His decease, besides becoming to Lady Mary what Sir Thomas Browne calls 'a melancholy *Utinam*,' is also a convenient landmark in her career, and it was succeeded shortly afterwards by the death of the Duchess her mother, whose health had long been failing. By this time Lady Mary was a woman of forty; and, with the exception of some not very definite advances from Lord Bessborough, it does not appear that any further attempts were made to induce her to change her

Eighteenth Century Studies

condition, or to imperil her fidelity to the memory 'of the PERSON who is gone'—a figure of speech by which Prince Edward, with more or less garniture of grief, continues for some time to be designated in her 'Journal.' This she began to keep in August, 1766, not long before the Prince's death, and she went on keeping it for twenty-five years, or until 1791. At her death the MS. became the property of her niece, Lady Frances Scott. From Lady Frances Scott it passed to that lady's nephew, Lord Montagu; and from Lord Montagu to his grandson, the Earl of Home, by whom three volumes have already been printed. These three volumes come down to December, 1771, and it is contemplated, says the Introduction, to extend the reprint to 1774. One of the objects in view having been the preservation of the MS., it is reproduced without abridgment, a course which, though absolutely justifiable, in a private issue, is naturally not entirely to its advantage as a composition, since to say that it is uniformly interesting would be to praise it too generously. To a thoroughly popular chronicle of this kind, incident, character-painting, description, or anecdote are as a rule indispensable; and in no one of these requirements can Lady Mary be described as highly gifted. She was truthful, and although her bias was to details rather than essentials, she desired to be accurate; but her mind, eminently matter-of-fact and methodical, was of too buckram a cast for genuine enthusiasm, while her literary equipment, certain stock-taking attributes excepted, was of the slightest. Writing, moreover, not—like Horace Walpole—to a wholly uninformed friend in a foreign land, but to her sisters, Lady Dalkeith and Lady Strafford, she naturally dwells little upon the aspect of things which were familiar to her correspondents, and most of her picturesque passages—such as they are—occur in her despatches from abroad. Nevertheless, her 'Journal,' when all deductions are made, contains many minute details of court and social life in the second half of the last century which cannot safely be neglected by the future editors of its literature.

In politics, although she numbered among her acquaint-

Lady Mary Coke

ances Miss Anne Pitt, that ardent politician and duplicate of her brother, Lady Mary seems to have taken but slender interest. She goes on one occasion to a debate in the Commons, but she says little notable about it beyond the fact that Elizabeth Neale (Mason's 'Patriot Betty'), the fruit-woman of St. James's Street, was also present, and that Lord John Cavendish spoke 'with a moderation, candour, & politeness, as is seldom practiced in that House.' She also heard Burke, who 'talked chiefly to the passions,' and was followed by Lord Clare (of Goldsmith's 'Haunch of Venison'), who, unlike Lord John Cavendish, was disrespectful enough to style the preceding orator 'a rain-bow' that 'had brilliant colours, but nothing else'; alluding [says Lady Mary] to his flow of eloquence, without speaking much to the argument, which, on this occasion, was just enough. To a literary taste—it has already been observed—Lady Mary made definite claims. 'We had some conversation upon Books,' she writes, speaking of Lady Charlotte Finch. 'She recommended two to me upon religious subjects, I shall send for them to Morrow. I have laid out in books since I came to Town about fifty Pounds.' Fifty Pounds was certainly more than she spent on her new Sedan Chair, which cost £32 11s. But it is probable, nevertheless, that her reading was more a duty than a pleasure; and although one is indisposed to take sides with her unworshipful husband, it is difficult not to believe that when (with needless brutality) he doubted her ability to comprehend 'Locke on the Understanding,' he was not far wrong. To judge from her comments, she seems to read as some folks travel, in order to say she has done so; and she seldom records anything to show that she has otherwise profited by the labour. She goes through Swift's wonderful 'Journal' without—so to speak—a single note of admiration—nothing but a curt and conventional 'entertained me very much.' 'Measure for Measure' she likes more than 'twelfth night'; Voltaire's History is 'very partial'; Mrs. Macaulay's is 'very prejudiced'; Barrow 'Upon Contentment' suits her case;—of all which

Eighteenth Century Studies

one may say with Ben Jonson—'Faith these are politic notes!' The only work upon which she offers anything resembling an intelligent opinion is Horace Walpole's 'Historic Doubts on Richard the Third.' 'Twas (she says) about four hours reading [this is a characteristic touch!]; the style and Language admirable, as everything that he writes is, but he has not made it appear (at least to me) that Richard was innocent of many of the crimes laid to his charge by former Historians.' And if there is little sign of any real enthusiasm about Letters, there is still less of what sometimes accompanies even very moderate manifestations of that enthusiasm—a curiosity about authors. It was the age of Gray, and Goldsmith, and Burke, and Johnson,¹ and yet the literary personages (Walpole excepted) with whom she actually comes into communication are the smallest of luminaries—Mr. Mason, Miss Elizabeth Carter, and so forth. Hume is a prominent exception. But Hume was 'in society'; he had been a Secretary of Legation, and he was an Under Secretary of State. She met him at Park Place, General Conway's house near Henley, and she has several entries about him. 'Mr. Hume does not like Shakespear,' she says. 'Wou'd you have thought it possible that a Man of Genius shou'd not be able to discover the Beauties of that admirable Writer?'² 'He has a violent stomach,'

¹ Under date of Friday, 18 March, 1768, the death of Sterne (two volumes of whose sermons had been presented to Lady Mary by the PERSON) is thus referred to: 'Ld Ossory told Us that the famous Dr. Sterne dyed that Morning; he seem'd to lament him very much. Ld Eglington said (but not in a ludicrous manner) that he had taken his "Sentimental Journey." Lord Ossory was one of the guests at *Fish* Crawford's dinner in Clifford Street, whence the footman John Macdonald was despatched to Sterne's lodgings, 'at the silk bag shop in Old Bond Street,' to inquire how he did. Macdonald saw him die.

² Speaking of Shakespeare in the 'History' (Appendix No. IV.), Hume himself amply confirms Lady Mary: 'Nervous and picturesque expressions as well as descriptions abound in him [Shakespeare], but it is in vain we look either for purity or simplicity of diction. His total ignorance of all theatrical art and conduct, however material a defect, yet, as it affects the spectator rather than the reader, we can more easily excuse, than that want of taste which often prevails in his productions, and which gives way only by intervals to the irradiations of genius.'

Lady Mary Coke

she says again, speaking of his excellent appetite for venison. On a wet Sunday she engages him in a serious discussion. 'You know Mr. Hume is a great Infidel: 'tis the only thing I dislike in him. I have had some conversation with him, but I have no hopes of converting him from his erroneous way of thinking.' After this, the record goes on to relate that she went to Church (being the only one of the party that did so), and got a new hat and gloves spoiled by the rain because the chaise could not enter the Church yard. 'The Sermon was not worth it, & the prayers I might have read at home.'

Lady Mary's mention of Mr. Hume's appetite is not by any means her sole reference to eating. On the contrary, she is unusually explicit as to what she likes, and what disagrees with her. With neither of these themes need we linger. But a dinner at Lady Blandford's, on which she pauses to comment, deserves mention for its suggestion of those confused and copious entertainments which so much astonished Thackeray in Swift's 'Polite Conversation.' 'I never saw her have a worse dinner,' writes the diarist: 'a great round of boiled beef, little mutton pyes, beans & bacon, Mackerel without fennel sauce. The second course, a neck of Lamb, a gooseberry pye, & two other little things, not meat. . . . Boiled beef is a good thing, but a dish I seldom eat, & little mutton pyes are too savory for me, beans I hate, & mackerel without fennel sauce I can't eat; judge then if I made a good dinner.' For some of these gastronomic records, especially from abroad, one has no doubt to thank the curiosity of her sisters. 'You see I obey your orders in mentioning what I eat,' she writes from France, '& I shall certainly take notice of all the birds, beast, & fish peculiar to the Country.' But there is one pleasure of the table of which her record is apparently involuntary, and that is play. Whist or Loo (which she spells Lu¹), tredrille or quadrille,

¹ 'I observe (she says) I spell the game of Lu differently to every body else, but I believe I am right, as I copy Mr. Pope, who wrote it in the same manner: I refer you to the rape of the Lock' [canto iii., 62].

Eighteenth Century Studies

ombre or lansquenet, the traces are everywhere; and yet she does not seem to have been, like Miss Pelham for instance, an inveterate card-player. Here, chosen almost at random, is a sequence of days. *Thursday*. 'The Duchess of Richmond, Ly Sondes, &c., play'd till near twelve O'clock; I lost fifty guineas.' *Friday*. 'The Party lasted till near eleven O'clock; I won four guineas.' *Saturday*. 'I won thirteen guineas.' *Sunday*. 'I play'd at Quadrille with Madame de Viry, &c.' [No money transactions recorded.] *Sunday* [a week later]. 'At eight O'clock I went to M^{rs}. Harris, & lost five & twenty guineas at Lu.' And so forth, on almost every page. One can imagine how heartily honest Parson Adams would have groaned over these deplorable evidences of fashionable folly. Sometimes they have an unexpected postscript, such as 'Read three Chapters in the Revelations,' or 'Read a little in the bible & went to bed.' Another passage refers to the supposed efficacy of the carp bone (the palate) in bringing luck at cards. 'The carp bones are intolerable: in the evening I lost eight & twenty guineas at Ly Hertford's: I have thrown one [*i.e.* a carp bone] in the fire, but whether 'tis yours or M^{rs}. Jackson's I can't tell.' Six years later, nevertheless, she is still in bondage to the same fetish: 'I lost fifteen guineas tho' the carp bone lay upon the table; but I fear the Princess [Amelia] has taken away the virtue, for she unfolded the paper, took it out, and called it an old tooth, which diverted the company more than it did me, for from that time I lost. At cards I am superstitious, & as it is only at play 'tis pardonable.'

Many of the entries in the 'Journal' closely resemble those of Addison's 'Fine Lady' in the 'Spectator.' 'From ten to twelve. In conference with my mantua-maker. Sorted a suit of ribbons. Broke my blue china cup'—says the fictitious Clarinda. 'Dined at home. In the evening made several visits. Called on Ly Frances: her dog tore one of my laced ruffles'—says the actual Lady Mary; and it must be confessed that the main texture of her record is of a like material. Its warp is gossip,

Lady Mary Coke

and scandal is its woof. Here and there, indeed, and especially when she is thinking of 'the PERSON that is gone,' her reflections take an unusually Gummidge-like turn. For example, 'I was not born to be happy, & the same ill fortune that attended me early in life pursues me still.' 'Mr. Pope or somebody else said in their letters that the Unfortunate were of all others most unfit to be alone, yet the World generally took care they shou'd be so: this observation I have experienced to be true, for tho' within the little distance of two miles & a half from Town [she was at Notting Hill], 'tis very seldom that any body ever comes to me.' 'The World little knows the variety of sorrows that has attended my life, as I have industriously kept many things a secret.' 'I went to Church at the Usual time, & was much pleased with the Sermon; the text was "it is good for me that I have been Afflicted."' 'Twas a very fine discourse, & very reasonable; tho' under the immediate pressure of adverse fortune, one cannot find the good of suffering. I submit most Humbly to the Will of God in all those sorrows & disappointments that has attended my Life, but what benefit is likely to arise from my present misery I am yet to learn.' This note is at its highest after the Duke's death; but as time goes on, its manifestations are more or less sporadic, and even at its worst she is able to turn easily to such sublunary matters as a marriage, a separation, or a possible christening. The latest story about Fanny Pelham or Lady Sarah Bunbury, the latest tittle-tattle about the Duchess of Grafton or Lady Bolingbroke, the latest scandal about Miss Chudleigh or Lady Grosvenor and the Duke of Cumberland—all or any of these are sufficient to divert her at once from the details of her own misfortunes. With one confessed characteristic of her style it is impossible not to agree. 'I am not florid in my descriptions,' she says of a fête at Syon House; and it is true that it would be difficult to select from her pages any of those graphic passages which, in Walpole, lie everywhere on the surface. This is abundantly evident when, as is sometimes the case, the records of each treat of the same event, and the different methods of

Eighteenth Century Studies

the writers can be contrasted. In the month of July, 1770, they both accompanied the Princess Amelia, at her request, to Lord Temple's house at Stowe in Buckingham, where they stayed five days. Lady Mary gives a daily register of the proceedings, dates and hours of arrival and departure, state of the weather, occupations, amusements, and (though she does not describe it) dwells particularly on the Roman Arch which Lord Temple had erected in H.R.H.'s honour. 'I think L^d Strafford w^d like it, & I am sure he would be pleased with the Scene from it as it is the most beautiful I ever saw.' 'The Princess visits her Arch two or three times in the day.' . . . 'I forgot to tell you that after dinner the Coffee was order'd at the Princess's Arch, Apollo with the nine muses are placed on each side of it. While they drank their Coffee, I observed Apollo held a paper in his hand, but not being able to reach it, I desired L^d Temple's assistance, who with some difficulty took it from the hand of Apollo: a copy of which I enclose in this Journal [it is not there printed]. Mr. Walpole is the Author. I'm sure you'll think them [the verses] pretty.'

In a letter to George Montagu, Walpole tells the same story. With a stroke or two he hits off the whole party, touches lightly on the famous associations of the place, scoffs at the elderly valetudinarians (himself included) who are playing at pastoral, and supping in a grotto, 'which (he says) is as proper to this climate as a sea-coal fire would be in the dog-days at Tivoli,' and finally comes to Lady Mary's *pièce de résistance*, the Roman arch, of which she certainly gives 'no florid discription,' as it is impossible from her account to conceive what it is like. But in Walpole it stands before us like the stonework of Piranesi, framing a landscape by Wilson. 'The chief entertainment of the week, at least what was so to the Princess, is an arch, which Lord Temple has erected to her honour in the most enchanting of all picturesque scenes. It is inscribed on one side, "AMELIÆ SOPHIÆ, AUG.," and has a medallion of her on the other. It is placed on an eminence at the top of the Elysian fields [a part of the Stowe Gardens], in a grove of orange-trees.

Lady Mary Coke

You come to it on a sudden, and are startled with delight on looking through it: you at once see, through a glade, the river winding at the bottom; from which a thicket rises, arched over with trees, but opened, and discovering a hillock full of hay-cocks, beyond which in front is the Palladian bridge [another feature of the Gardens], and again over that a larger hill crowned with the castle. It is a tall landscape framed by the arch and the over-bowering trees, and comprehending more beauties of light, shade, and buildings than any picture of Albano I ever saw.' Mr. Walpole goes to confirm Lady Mary by saying that 'between the flattery and the prospect the Princess was really in Elysium: she visited her arch four or five times every day, and could not satiate herself with it.' And then he copies for Mr. Montagu the lines which Lady Mary claims to have first detected in the grasp of Apollo:

'T'other day, with a beautiful frown on her brow,
To the rest of the gods said the Venus of Stowe,
"What a fuss is here made with that arch just erected,
How *our* temples are slighted, *our* altars neglected!
Since yon Nymph has appear'd, *we* are noticed no more,
All resort to *her* shrine, all *her* presence adore;
And what's more provoking, before all our faces,
Temple thither has drawn both the Muses and Graces."
"Keep your temper, dear child," Phœbus cried with a smile,
"Nor this happy, this amiable festival spoil.
Can your shrine any longer with garlands be dress'd?—
When a true goddess reigns, all the false are suppressed."

It is time, however, to turn from the unprofitable expanse of Lady Mary's town life to those continental tours which are its oases. In 1767 she had already visited the Continent. In the October of 1769 she again set out for Aix in Provence, passing by Geneva, from which place she visited Voltaire at Ferney. He received her with great urbanity, 'in a flowered silk waistcoat & night gown, a dark periwig without powder, slippers, & a cap in his hand.' Although seventy-six years of age, he insisted upon escorting her over his garden; and he showed her the ivory box, turned by the Empress's own hand, which had been presented to him by Catherine II. of Russia. 'I told him (says Lady Mary) I thought it the best action

Eighteenth Century Studies

of her life, confessing I was no admirer of that great Lady's, but that I thought her perfectly in the right to endeavour to make him her friend; He smiled but made no answer.' 'He has lately published "Siècle de Louis 15" (she goes on), which I am now reading.' At Avignon she visits the Tomb of Laura in the Church of the Cordeliers, afterwards destroyed in the Revolution; at Aix, where she winters, she makes the acquaintance of M. de Vence, grandson of Madame de Sévigné's granddaughter Julie de Simiane, whose house and family portraits he is good enough to exhibit to her, together with a number of books containing Madame de Sévigné's manuscript notes. A day or two afterwards she pays a visit of ceremony to the Duc de Villars, Governor of Provence and son of Louis XIV.'s famous Marshal. Her little sketch of this specimen of the great French *noblesse* almost attains the proportions of a costume piece. 'Madame de Montauban went with me: he received Us in his Bed Chamber which is hung with a two Colour'd velvet; the Bed the same, with glasses, tables, Clocks, & many other ornamented pieces of furniture: his dress more studied then you can imagine, for tho' the Duke is turn'd seventy, he has more attention to his appearance then many people in the prime of life; he wears the order of the Golden fleece in very fine diamonds, & his waistcoat is only button'd at the bottom, that the magnificence of his lace may not be conceal'd, which from time to time he sets to rights, perhaps to have it the more taken notice of: the buttons to his Shirt being very fine diamonds are likewise adjusted very often, probably for the same purpose: he is in his person taller & thinner then almost any person I ever saw, which, notwithstanding the many ornaments, gives an air of awkwardness to his figure: he wears a little rouge & red heels to his shoes. . . . He is perfectly good humour'd & polite, excessively Charitable, & does a great deal of good in this Country.'

Later on, Lady Mary makes a pilgrimage to the 'fontaine de Vaucluse,' concerning which she has only to record that she dined upon 'some excellent fish taken out of the water that flows from the Fontaine.' She then

Lady Mary Coke

passes on to Nismes, whence she visits the Château de Grignan which, at that date, belonged to the Maréchal Comte du Muy. Her enthusiasm for Madame de Sévigné, though probably contracted at second hand from Horace Walpole, has a more genuine air than most of her raptures. '*Me Voici enfin dans cet Magnifique Château,*' records the 'Journal' for Monday, March 12, 1770. 'I have not been sensible of so much pleasure for a very long time as I was when I came in sight of this Castle, at my entrance into it, & with the thoughts of passing the remainder of the day, and lodging here at night. I have walk'd over every room, & have already visited the Apartment of Madame de Sévigné three times.' [She sends for the 'oldest inhabitant,' who gives her his recollections, points out where Madame de Sévigné's coffin was placed, recounts the grief of her daughter Madame de Grignan, who could not even endure to hear the bells ring for her mother's death, and so forth.] 'I am so proud of my present habitation that I am inclined to set up all night to write letters, in order to date them from hence. I am now setting in a great apartment not within hearing of a human being, nor is there anybody to lie upon the same floor. There are five Apartments as large as this: numbers in the floor above, & the great Gallery mention'd in Madame de Sévigné's letters is below, even with the terrace, which is the finest I ever saw, much finer then that at Windsor Castle. My imagination is so totally imploy'd about Madame de Sévigné that I am persuaded by and by I shall think She appears to me: every noise I hear I expect to see the door open. . . . You cannot imagine with what reluctance I left. . . . Upon a heath not very far from Grignan I gather'd some cones of pines which I shall sow on my return to England in hopes of seeing something to put me in mind of that Charming place.'

In 1770 Lady Mary again quitted England for the Continent. Although she had liked Aix, for some unexplained reason she did not return there, but set her wings for Vienna. 'I have always wished to see the Empress (she says), & cannot take a better time then this

Eighteenth Century Studies

Autumn to put that project in execution.' Accordingly she set out, in a travelling coach she had bought from Lady Holland, and made her way *viâ* Dover and Calais to Brussels. At Nuremberg, the famous pea-green and silver costume caused her to be 'mobed,' an occurrence which, to use her favourite expression, must have somewhat 'hurried her spirits.' Then, embarking at Ratisbon, she went down the Danube to Vienna. At Vienna she had many aristocratic friends, Prince Kaunitz-Rietberg, the Prime Minister, Lord Stormont, the British Envoy, Count Seilern, who had been Ambassador in England, and others; and it was not long before she received the Empress's order to attend her. Here is her description of Maria Theresa at fifty-three. 'The door of the outward room open'd & the Empress came in. L^d Strafford saw her in her great beauty; but that, the small pox & a great increase of fat, has deprived her off; for every body here affirms that till She had the small pox [in 1767] She was extremely handsome. What remains I shall mention; She is about my height, & tho' very fat not at all incumber'd with it, a genteel slope, holds herself extremely well, & her air the most Noble I ever saw: 'tis still visible her features have been extremely fine and regular, tho' the swelling from the small pox never quite gone down & a little degree of redness remaining: more spirit and sense in her eyes than I think I ever saw, & the most pleasing voice in speaking. This is the most exact picture that can be drawn. She was very gracious & presented the Emperor & the Arch Dukes herself.' Of the Austrian Court and its decorums, of its *parfilage*¹ and its card-parties, Lady Mary has much to say. But her most picturesque description, perhaps because it best lends itself to the touch of the Court Circular in her style, is the famous *Course de Traineaux*, or Procession of Sleighs,

¹ This, a popular feminine occupation *circa* 1770-80, consisted in pulling out the gold and silver threads from cast-off lace, epaulets, tassels, etc., which threads were afterwards sold. 'All the Ladys who don't play at cards (says Lady Mary) pick gold: 'tis the most general fashion I ever saw: they all carry their bags in their pockets.'

Lady Mary Coke

which she was lucky enough to witness in February, 1771. 'There were eight and twenty *Traineaus*, & two footmen, belonging to each Gentleman who guided the traineau, on horseback in rich liveries. The Emperor had eight & twenty; but all these preceeded the traineaus, for each Lady had two running footmen in rich dresses that run on each side. At twelve o'clock it began. A Traineau with eight Trumpeters & one Kettle Drummer came first, then eighteen equerries in a uniform of red & gold preceeded the Emperor's Traineau, which was extremely carved & gilt all over: the seat, where the Arch Duchess sat, crimson velvet laced & fringed with gold; her dress crimson velvet trimed with gold & sable, the body with diamonds & her head covered with diamonds. The Emperor, who guided the traineau, was dressed the same as the Arch Duchess, crimson velvet laced all over with gold, lined with sable; his hair tyd with a white ribbon, & a hat with white feathers in the hat & three standing up-right, with the button &c. in diamonds; a broad white ribbon across his shoulders to fasten his muff: four running footmen, two on each side, in crimson velvet dresses lac'd all over with gold, the Horse with white plumes of feathers all up his neck & upon his head, the furniture which cover'd all his body, crimson velvet imbroider'd all over with gold. The next Traineau was Prince Albert de Saxe & the Arch Duchess Elizabeth, in all respects like the Emperor's, only that he had but two running footmen, & I think his hat was more covered with diamonds then the Emperor's.' [This completes the Imperial Family, and justifies abridgement.] 'Tis to no purpose to describe them all; in general the Lady's & the Gentleman's dress who guided the Traineau were the same colour, which had a very good effect. All the Gentlemen had diamonds in their hats, & those ladies who were dressed in blue velvet & gold, had ermine instead of sable, & the gentlemen's coats & muffs ermine also. The Ladys' dresses all came down to their wrists & up to their throats. It lasted two hours.'

Another of the scenes at which Lady Mary assisted was a ceremonial which has been commemorated by the brush

Eighteenth Century Studies

of Wilkie¹—the ancient and still-enduring rite of the *Fusswaschung* on Holy Thursday. 'Twas perform'd (she says) in the great room where the Empress sees Company, where there are too tables, one for twelve old men served by the Emperor & the Arch Dukes; the other for twelve old Women served by the Empress & the Arch Duchesses; all dressed in the great dress with the addition of a black veil. I never saw the Empress look so Gracefull. She charmed me more to-day then ever: all the Ladys of the Court attended in black veils also. The Empress stood opposite the three first old Women, placed all the dishes & took them off; but with a grace that is not to be described: her manner of holding the napkin was so genteel that I cou'd have look'd at her for ever, & if you had heard her talk to those three old Women you wd have been delighted. When I came up to the table She said, "One of my oldest acquaintance is not here: She was taken ill this morning in the Church. She had come here from the time of my Grand Father the Emperor Leopold." She afterwards did me the honour to tell me that She was not now able to perform the rest of the function: She said her breath wou'd not permit her, but added, "My Daughter will do it." She then said: "but you should see the Emperor perform the ceremony." . . . Accordingly we went to the other side, where the Emperor was serving the twelve old Men, but I remark'd he did not talk to them as the Empress did to the old Women. . . . I return'd again to the Empress who was placing the second course upon the table. When She had taken it off, the table was removed & She sat down upon a stool. The Ladys of the Court pulled off the shoes & stockings of the old Women, & one of the Chamberlains brought a great gilt dish & another held a ewer with water. The eldest Arch Duchess then kneel'd down, wash'd, & kissed the feet of each old Woman going from one to the other

¹ Wilkie painted two pictures on this subject—one in 1827, 'A Roman Princess [the Princess Doria] washing the Pilgrims' Feet,' and the other in 1829, 'Cardinals, Priests, and Roman Citizens washing the Pilgrims' Feet.' George IV. bought the former; the latter was purchased by Sir Willoughby Gordon.

Lady Mary Coke

upon her knees, for She is not to rise till She has perform'd it all. When She has finished She gets up & is presented by one of the Ladys of the Court with a ribbon to which hangs a purse, which she puts over the head of each old Woman. The Emperor does the same by the Men; they then all came to the Empress who rose up & retired.' Shortly after this, Lady Mary left Vienna, with the unusual distinction of having been embraced by Maria Theresa at a private audience, and presented with a keepsake in the shape of 'a fine medallion set with jewels.' At Paris, on the way home, she visited Madame Geoffrin, Madame du Deffand and Madame de Boufflers; and she had a brief interview with Marie Antoinette, whom she afterwards saw at the Review of the French and Suisse Guards, to which the Dauphiness came with the Princess de Lamballe in a gorgeous Glass Coach with eight white Horses.

The success of Lady Mary's visit to the Court of Vienna, coupled perhaps with a certain coolness on her part to the Court of St. James, arising as much from its heartless disregard of her pretensions in respect of 'the PERSON who is gone' as from her own sense of the reprehensible conduct of the Dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester, induced her before the year was out to visit the Austrian capital once more. She was again received with cordiality; but a third expedition in 1773 was unhappily a mistake. She had the misfortune to become involved in some Court feud and fell into discredit with the Empress. Discredit with the Court naturally followed, and she ultimately left Vienna with the fixed idea that Maria Theresa had condescended to become her enemy, and that, as usual, she was a deeply injured woman. Unluckily, this, as time went on, was not her only mishap of the kind. She contrived to embroil herself hopelessly with the good-humoured Princess Amelia, whom she forced to give her her *congé*; and she alienated even her faithful admirer, Horace Walpole, who had rallied her vagaries with admirable *bonhomie*, had dedicated to her the second edition of his 'Castle of Otranto,' and had made her the

Eighteenth Century Studies

recipient of five-and-twenty most charmingly playful letters, the majority of which, until 1892, remained unprinted among the papers of the late Mr. Drummond Moray of Abercairny. But though she lost her friends and her beauty, she lost none of her peculiarities, which, with the march of years, became even more pronounced and more complicated. She lingered into the second decade of the present century, an old, lonely, unhappy woman, dying at last in a dull little villa at Chiswick, long since absorbed in the grounds of Chiswick House. Fantastic to the end, she is reported to have insisted on quitting this vale of tears 'with a high-crowned beaver hat upon her head.'

MATTHEW PRIOR

AMONG the treasures exhibited in the Pope Loan Museum at Twickenham,¹ were some of those large-paper—those very large-paper—*folio* volumes in which the collected works of the author of 'The Rape of the Lock' made their first imposing appearance. The 'Poems' of the author of 'Alma' belong to the same race of bibliographical Anakims. With the small copy of 1718, Johnson might have knocked down Osborn the bookseller; with the same work in its taller form, Osborn the bookseller might have laid prostrate the 'Great Lexicographer' himself. It is, of a surety, one of the vastest volumes of verse in existence. Tried, as it lies before us, by the practical test which Macaulay applied to Nares's 'Memoirs of Burleigh,' it is found to measure about eighteen inches by twelve; it weighs from nine to ten pounds avoirdupois; and in handling it, one recalls involuntarily those complicated contortions in the throes of which, many years since, Mr. George du Maurier depicted the ill-fated student of a latter-day *édition de luxe*. As one turns the pages of the big tome, it is still with a sense of surprise and incongruity. The curious mythological head-pieces with their muscular nymphs and dank-haired river-gods, the mixed atmosphere of Dryden and 'the Classicks,' the unfamiliar look of the lightest trifles in the largest type, the jumble of ode and epigram, of Martial and Spenser, of La Fontaine and the 'weary King Ecclesiast,'—all tend to heighten the wonderment with which one contemplates those portentous 'Poems on Several Occasions.' And then, if by chance the book should contain—as it sometimes does—

¹ The Museum was open for a week in July and August, 1888. The books lent included some large paper copies of Pope's 'Poems,' 1717 and 1735, which once belonged to Michael, the brother of Martha and Teresa Blount, of Mapledurham.

Eighteenth Century Studies

the famous print by George Vertue, after Belle, one realizes the fact that the author was an Envoy and Ambassador who was once privileged to 'bandy civilities' with the *Roi-Soleil*, and who, not the less, upon the strength of this very performance, in that golden Georgian age, managed to extract some four thousand guineas from the pockets of the most distinguished of his Georgian contemporaries. In the twenty double-column pages which follow the poet's dedicatory panegyric of the Right Honourable Charles, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex,—surely a paragon of noble-men and patrons!—you may read their titles. There they are, all of them,—

' Art, science, wit!
Soldiers like Cæsar,
Statesmen like Pitt! '

poets like Swift (who took five copies) and Pope and Congreve, painters like Jervas and Kneller, bishops like Atterbury, maids-of-honour like the '*Honourable Mrs. Mary Bellenden*'—in fine, all the notabilities from Newton to Nash, and each, as must be assumed from the pecuniary result above recorded, promptly paying down his or her subscription for the monster miscellany put forth by 'left-legged' Jacob Tonson, 'at *Shakespeare's-Head* over against *Katherine-Street* in the *Strand*.' In the prefatory sonnet to his '*Nuits d' Hiver*,' poor Henry Murger invoked an anticipatory blessing upon '*l'homme rare*'—the prospective purchaser who, '*sans marchander d'un sou*,' should pay a crown for his collection of verses. But what triple—what quadruple—what infinitely-extended benediction ought properly to encompass and accompany the buyer of a Brobdingnagian *folio* of poems, largely official and didactic, for the munificent sum of two pounds and two shillings!

If to these divisions of 'didactic' and 'official' be added a third, under the general title of 'occasional or familiar' verses, we have a rough-and-ready classification of Prior's legacy to posterity. With the first group we need not greatly occupy ourselves, and except as far as

Matthew Prior

concerns the writer's biography, may practically neglect the second, always provided that we give its fitting commendation to the delightful burlesque of M. Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, his 'Ode sur la Prise de Namur.' What is vital in Prior to-day is not what he fondly deemed his masterpiece,—

' Indeed poor SOLOMON in Rhime
Was much too grave to be Sublime,'

he confesses, rather ruefully, in his last published poem, 'The Conversation.' It is neither upon 'Solomon' nor the 'Carmen Seculare for the Year 1700' that Prior's claim to poetic honours is based, but rather upon those light-hearted and whimsical 'Vers de Société' which have charmed alike judges as diverse as Cowper and Thackeray. 'Every man,' says Cowper, defending his favourite against the 'king critic,' Johnson,—'every man conversant with verse-writing knows, and knows by painful experience, that the familiar style is of all styles the most difficult to succeed in. To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic, to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporaneous speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior; many have imitated his excellence in this particular, but the best copies have fallen far short of the original.'¹ 'Prior's,' says Thackeray again, also putting in his respectful protest against 'the great Samuel,' 'seem to me amongst the easiest, the richest, the most charmingly humorous of English lyrical poems. Horace is always in his mind, and his song, and his philosophy, his good sense, his happy easy turns and melody, his loves, and his Epicureanism, bear a great resemblance to that most delightful and accomplished master.'² If Prior is to be judged by his

¹ Cowper to the Rev. William Unwin, 17 January, 1782.

² 'English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century,' 1853,—'Prior, Gay, and Pope.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

peers, we may take the decision of Cowper and Thackeray as one against which there is no appeal. Both were lovers of Horace; both were humorists; both, when they chose, themselves excelled in that 'familiar style' of which the art is only hidden. Perhaps, if there be anything in the theory which makes kindliness one of the fundamental characteristics of the Humorist as opposed to the Wit, both Thackeray and Cowper belonged more distinctly to the former class than Prior; but, in any case, both possessed that sympathetic insight into Prior's work without which there can be no real comprehension.

Matthew Prior was of humbler extraction than either Pope or Gay. He was born, as is now generally supposed, at Wimborne or Wimborne Minster, in East Dorset, on the 21st July, 1664, his father, George Prior, being described as a joiner. From the presence in the St. John's College register of the epithet '*generosus*,' it has been surmised that the elder Prior may have held some land, but the general laxity of the record does not justify much theorizing. Of his son's life in his native town there is but one anecdote. In the library over the sacristy in the old church of St. Cuthberga is a chained copy of Raleigh's great 'History of the World' of 1614, in which a hole is said to have been burned by Master Matthew, when dozing over the book by the light of a smuggled taper. That between the magnificent opening and the eloquent close of those thirteen hundred *folio* pages there are many nodding places, may be conceded; but, unfortunately, there are also incredulous spirits who contend that this particular defacement is the work, not of a candle, but of a red-hot poker.¹ From Wimborne the elder Prior moved to London, of which place his son, in the account drawn up by himself for Jacob's 'Lives of the English Poets' describes him as a citizen. He is stated to have taken up his abode in Stephen's Alley, Westminster, whence he

¹ Candle or poker, it is hard to surrender this picturesque tradition entirely. But Mr. G. A. Aitken has practically demolished it by the discovery that the books were placed in the library at a much later date than Prior's boyhood ('Contemporary Review,' May, 1890).

Matthew Prior

sent young Matthew to the neighbouring school, then under the rule (or ferule) of the redoubtable Dr. Busby. By the time he had reached the middle of the third form his father died. His mother being unable to pay his school fees, he fell into the care of an uncle, a vintner, and the proprietor of the old-established Rhenish Wine House in Channel (now Cannon) Row, Westminster.¹

His uncle, finding him not only intelligent, but a fair accountant, took him as his assistant, his seat being in the bar, then the favourite rendezvous of Lord Dorset and his associates. Calling one day to ask for his friend, Mr. Fleetwood Shepherd, Dorset found young Prior with a Horace in his hand, and questioning him thereupon, tested his proficiency by setting him to turn an ode into English. The boy did it in verse, and so well, that it became part of the entertainment of the users of the house to get him to translate Ovid and Horace. At last, upon one occasion when Dr. Sprat, the Dean of Westminster, and Mr. Knipe, the second master of the school, were both present, Lord Dorset asked him whether he would go back to his studies under Dr. Busby. As he and his uncle were equally willing, he began again to attend school, the Earl paying for his books, and his uncle for his clothes, until such time as he became a King's scholar. One of his schoolfellows was another Dorset lad, the Thomas Dibben who afterwards translated the 'Carmen Seculare' into Latin. But his chief boyish friends were two brothers who lived in Manchester House, a great mansion opposite his uncle's tavern. These were Charles and James Montagu, the sons of the Honourable George Montagu. Charles (afterwards Earl of Halifax) was rather older than Prior, and, at Westminster, his intimacy was stronger with James, who became Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer.² In 1682, Charles Montagu, a King's

¹ 'We took him [Roger Pepys] out of the Hall [*i.e.* Westminster Hall] to Prior's, the Rhenish winehouse, and there had a pint or two of wine and a dish of anchovies' (Pepys' 'Diary' by Mynors Bright, 3 Feb., 1660).

² Sir James Montagu left some valuable MS. memoranda respecting Prior, from a transcript of which several of the statements

Eighteenth Century Studies

scholar like himself, was admitted a fellow commoner of Trinity College, Cambridge, and, a year later, Prior, finding that the younger brother would probably follow his example, and fearing also that he himself would be sent to Christ Church, Oxford, accepted, much against Lord Dorset's will, one of three scholarships, then recently established by the Duchess of Somerset at St. John's College, Cambridge. This step, although for the time it alienated him from his patron, was not, in the event, unsatisfactory, because, being the only Westminster boy at St. John's, he attracted much more notice than he would have received elsewhere.

He was admitted to his bachelor's degree in 1686, and to the year following belongs one of his earliest excursions into letters. In 1687 Dryden published 'The Hind and the Panther,' and among the numerous replies which it called forth was a thin *quarto*, entitled 'The Hind and the Panther transvers'd to the Story of the Country-Mouse and the City-Mouse.' It is not one of those performances which, in these days, offer great attractions to the reader, although, when it appeared, in addition to being exceedingly popular with the No-Popery party, it was, in all probability, full-packed with topical allusion. Ostensibly, Prior shared the honours of authorship with Charles Montagu, but it is most likely, as is inferred in more than one anecdote, that the work was mainly his,¹ and there are certainly some touches in it which might be supposed to have been especially dictated by his recollections of the Rhenish Wine House:

' *Drawers* must be trusted, through whose hands convey'd
You take the *Liquor*, or you spoil the Trade.
For sure those *Honest Fellows* have no knack

in this paper have been derived. The original document, which once belonged to the Duchess of Portland, is said to be preserved among the Harley papers at Longleat.

¹ Cf. Lord Peterborough, as reported by Spence ('Anecdotes' by Singer, 2nd ed., 1858, p. 102). Sir James Montagu, in his memorandum, as might be expected, divides the praise more equally. But he adds that the poem 'contributed not less to the credit of Mr. Prior, who became thereby reconciled to his first patron the Earl of Dorset.'

Matthew Prior

Of putting off *stum'd Claret* for *Pontack*.
How long, alas! would the poor Vintner last,
If all that drink must *judge*, and every *Guest*
Be allowed to have an understanding *Tast*?'

According to Dean Lockier, Dryden was greatly pained by this parody.¹ 'I have heard him say; "for two young fellows, that I have always been very civil to; to use an old man in misfortunes, in so cruel a manner!"—And he wept as he said it.' This last detail is one of those which are the despair of the biographer. That the evidence is fairly good it is impossible to deny; but the story is wholly opposed to all we know of Dryden, and no one can be blamed who follows Johnson and Scott in declining to believe it.

In April, 1688, Prior obtained a fellowship, and in this year he figures as the composer of the annual poetical tribute which St. John's College paid to one of its benefactors, the Earl of Exeter. This he had undertaken at the instigation of Dr. Gower, the head of the College, who had always taken an especial interest in him. Those conversant with Prior's maturer muse will perhaps be surprised to hear that it was a rhymed exercise upon a verse of Exodus, in which some of the writer's critics discern the promise of his future 'Solomon.' It is more material to note that, as the following extract proves, he was already an academic disciple of Horace, or of such English Horatians as Dryden and Cowley:

'Why does the constant Sun
With measur'd Steps his radiant Journeys run?
Why does He order the Diurnal Hours
To leave Earth's other Part, and rise in Ours?
Why does He wake the correspondent Moon,
And fill her willing Lamp with liquid Light,
Commanding Her with delegated Pow'rs
To beautifie the World, and bless the Night?
Why does each animated Star
Love the just Limits of it's proper Sphere?
Why does each consenting Sign
With prudent Harmony combine
In Turns to move, and subsequent appear,
To gird the Globe, and regulate the Year?'

This, it may be imagined, with its careful and per-

¹ Spence, *ut supra*, p. 47.

Eighteenth Century Studies

spicuous art, must have been far above the usual average of the votive verses which went annually to 'Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.' One of its results was that Prior went to Burleigh himself. That distinguished connoisseur, John, Earl of Exeter, required a tutor for his sons, and Dr. Gower hastened to recommend the author of the metrical excursus upon Exodus. From a rambling rhyming epistle to Dorset's friend, Fleetwood Shepherd, who seems to have been Prior's mediator with his now reconciled first patron, he must have been staying at Burleigh in May, 1689, when it was dated.¹ But his tutorship was of brief duration. Lord Exeter was opposed to the Revolution and its consequences, and began to meditate migration to Italy in search of new art-treasures. Prior accordingly applied to Lord Dorset, who at William's accession had become Lord Chamberlain, for his patronage. Waiting longer than he anticipated, he sent to Shepherd, later Usher of the Black Rod, a second epistle by way of reminder. At the close of this comes a reference which is generally supposed to account for the absence of the verses from the authorized collections published in Prior's lifetime. Either in consequence of his share in the 'Country-Mouse and the City-Mouse,' or (as is more likely) because he was older, possessed superior interest, and had married a Dowager Countess, Charles Montagu had already entered upon what was to prove a distinguished path in life:

'There's One thing more I had almost slipt,
But that may do as well in *Post-script*;
My Friend *Charles Montague's* preferred;
Nor wou'd I have it long observ'd,
That *One Mouse Eats*, while *T'Other's* Starv'd.'

More fortunate than Gay, whose life was frittered away

¹ 'Sometimes I climb my Mare, and kick her
To bottl'd Ale, and neighbouring Vicar;
Sometimes at STAMFORD take a Quart,
'Squire SHEPHERD'S Health,—With all my Heart.'

At Burleigh Prior wrote the verses on Jordaens' picture of 'Seneca dying in a Bath,' which belonged to Lord Exeter, and also those 'To the Countess of Exeter, playing on the Lute,' both of which are printed in his volumes of 1709 and 1718.

Matthew Prior

in vain hopes of Court favour, Prior was not kept waiting much longer for a reply to his petition. Shortly after the above epistle, and it is only reasonable to suppose, in consequence of it, he was appointed, through Lord Dorset, secretary to Lord Dursley, afterwards Earl of Berkeley, then going as King William's Ambassador to the Hague.

With this, which, even in that paradise of patronage, must have been an exceptional elevation for an untried man of six-and-twenty, unblessed with advantages of birth, and having no distinction but a college fellowship, begins Prior's official career—a career which lasted the greater part of his lifetime. In Holland he must have remained several years. During the interim, he was made gentleman of the bedchamber to the king, with whom, owing to Lord Dursley's gout, he had frequent relations during the great Congress of 1691,¹ and, besides contributing to Dryden's 'Miscellanies,' he seems to have exhibited a commendable assiduity in the 'strict meditation' of that diplomatic muse, which (whatever else it might be) was certainly not thankless. In 1693 he prepared for the music of Purcell, a New Year's 'Hymn to the Sun'; and in 1695, he was conspicuous among the group of mourning bards who, in black-framed *folio*, shed their melodious tears for 'Dread MARIA'S *Universal Fall*'—otherwise Queen Mary's death. Later in the same year, in September, he sent to Tonson, from the Hague, one of his most admirable efforts in this way—his answer to Boileau's 'Ode sur la Prise de Namur' in 1692, in which, taking advantage of the town's recapture by the English three years later, he turns verse after verse of the French critic's pompous and parasitic song against himself. 'A secretary at 30,' he tells Tonson, 'is hardly allowed the privilege of burlesque,' and the 'English Ballad on the Taking of Namur,' rare in its first form (for it was afterwards considerably altered), has no author's name. But

¹ King Willam seems to have taken very kindly to Prior. When Lord Dursley went away on sick leave, his Majesty said he must leave Mr. Prior behind as *Secrétaire du Roy*.

Eighteenth Century Studies

neither this daring departure from metrical court-dress, nor the more fervent strain with which Prior greeted King William after the failure of the Assassination Plot of 1696, retains the characteristic vitality of a brief poem belonging to the same year, where the Epicurean '*Heer Secretáris*' describes his periodical progress—

' In a little Dutch-chaise on a Saturday night,
On my left hand my HORACE, a NYMPH on my right '—

to the extra-mural retreat in which, for the nonce, he escaped from Dutch tea-parties, state papers, and the 'long-winded cant of a dull refugee.'

In 1697 he was again acting as secretary to the negotiators at the Treaty of Ryswick, for bringing over the Articles of Peace in connection with which 'to their Excellencies the Lords Justices,' he received a gratuity of two hundred guineas; and, after being nominated Secretary of State in Ireland, he was made secretary, in the following year, to the splendid embassy to France of the Earl of Portland, an office which he continued under the Earl of Jersey. At this period it must have been that he delivered himself of that audacious utterance which is seldom omitted from any account of him. Looking, in the galleries of Versailles, at the famous battle-pieces of M. Charles Le Brun, with their arrogant inscriptions, he was asked if King William's palace had any corresponding decorations. 'The monuments of my Master's Actions,' he replied, 'are to be seen everywhere but in his own House.' If this excellent retort was ever repeated to Louis the Magnificent, it must be assumed that he was connoisseur enough to admire its neatness, as Prior seems to have always been an acceptable personage at the Court of France. This is amply evidenced from existing letters both of Louis and Anne. And it may be added that the favour of three monarchs, for (as already stated) William was also exceedingly well disposed to him, should conclusively negative the assertions of Pope and the historian Coxe as to Prior's diplomatic shortcomings. That he disliked his calling is conceivable, but, even if

Matthew Prior

there were not ample evidence to the contrary in the French archives, there can be no ground for concluding that he was inefficient. Swift, in his 'History of the Four Last Years of the Queen,' specially refers to his business aptitude, and Bolingbroke testifies to his acquaintance with matters of trade.¹ These are witnesses who are entitled to a hearing, even against Pope and the 'copious archdeacon' who compiled the life of Marlborough.

But to trace Prior's political fortunes in detail would be far beyond the scope of this paper. He continued at Paris some time after the arrival of the Earl of Manchester, who succeeded Lord Jersey, and then, having had 'a very particular audience' with his royal master at Loo in Holland, was made an under-secretary of state. This was in 1699, in the winter of which year he produced another lengthy official ode, the 'Carmen Seculare for the Year 1700,' an elaborate laudation of the exploits and achievements of his hero, 'the Nassovian.' Honours accumulated upon him rapidly at this date. The University of Cambridge dignified him with the degree of M.A., and he succeeded John Locke, invalided, as a Commissioner of Trade and Plantations. In 1701 he entered Parliament as member for East Grinstead. Under Anne he joined the Tories, a step which, while it brought him into close relations with Harley, Bolingbroke, and Swift, had also the effect of ranging him on the opposite side in politics to Addison, Garth, Steele, and some other of his literary contemporaries, besides depriving him of his Commissionership. In 1711 he was employed in the secret negotiations for the Peace of Utrecht; and in the following year went to Paris with Bolingbroke, eventually, in 1713, taking the place of the Duke of Shrewsbury as 'sole Minister.' Then came the queen's death and the triumph of the Whigs. When, after a brief period of

¹ Letter to Queen Anne at Windsor, 20th September, 1711. Prior's importance in the Utrecht negotiations, it may be added, is amply attested by the frequent recurrence of his name in the chapters which treat of that subject in Legrelle's 'La Diplomatie Française et la Succession d'Espagne,' vol. iv. (1892).

Eighteenth Century Studies

doubtful apprehensions, Prior returned to England in March, 1715, he was impeached and imprisoned for two years. During his confinement he wrote one of the longest of his poems, 'Alma; or, The Progress of the Mind.' In 1717 he was excepted from the Act of Grace, although he was, notwithstanding, shortly afterwards discharged. His varied employments had left him no richer than they found him. The Whigs had taken from him a Commissionership of Customs which had been given him by the Tories, and his means were limited to his St. John's fellowship. This, with unusual foresight, he had retained through all his vicissitudes. To increase his income, his friends, Arbuthnot, Gay, and others, but especially Lord Harley and Lord Bathurst,¹ devised the plan of printing his poems in the sumptuous *folio* already described. From one of his letters, it seems to have been delivered to the subscribers early in 1719, and, as we have said, it brought him 4000 guineas. To this, Lord Harley added an equal sum for the purchase of Down-Hall, in Essex (not far from the Hatfield Broad Oak of Mr. Locker Lampson's 'London Lyrics'), which was to revert to himself at Prior's death. There is a pretty ballad among Prior's posthumous works, but apparently wrongly dated 1715, which relates, 'to the tune of King John and the Abbot of Canterbury,' how he paid his first visit to his new abode, in company with Harley's land-jobbing agent, John Morley of Halstead, and it proves that cares of state had in no wise abated his metrical buoyancy or his keen sense of humour. In their progress they arrive at the still-existent Bull at Hoddesdon, in Hertfordshire, where, between insinuating Mr. Morley and the hostess, ensues the following colloquy of memories:

'Come here, my sweet Landlady, pray how d'ye do?
Where is *Cicily* so cleanly, and *Prudence*, and *Sue*?
And where is the widow that dwelt here below?
And the Hostler that sung about eight years ago?

'And where is your Sister, so mild and so dear?
Whose Voice to her Maids like a Trumpet was clear.

¹ Cf. Preface to 'Solomon' in 'Poems' of 1718.

Matthew Prior

By my Troth! she replies, you grow Younger I think:
And pray, Sir, what Wine does the Gentleman drink?

' Why now let me die, Sir, or live upon Trust,
If I know to which Question to answer you first:
Why Things, since I saw you, most strangely have vary'd,
The Hostler is Hang'd, and the Widow is marry'd.

' And *Prue* left a child for the Parish to nurse;
And *Cicily* went off with a Gentleman's purse:
And as to my Sister, so mild and so dear,
She has lain in the Church-yard full many a year.

' Well, Peace to her Ashes! what signifies Grief?
She roasted red *Veal* and she powder'd lean *Beef*:¹
Full nicely she knew to cook up a fine Dish,
For tough was her *Pullets*, and tender her *Fish*.'

In the old engraving by the once-popular Gerard Vandergucht, prefixed to the earlier editions of the poem, of which the foregoing by no means exhausts the lively humour, you shall see 'Matthew' and 'Squire Morley' lumbering along in their carved Georgian chariot, while Prior's Swedish servant Oeman, or Newman, mounted on his master's horse, Ralpho, paces slowly at the side. Having purchased Down-Hall, Prior continued to reside in Essex, for the most part, during the remainder of his life, diverting himself—much after Pope's fashion—with elaborate projects (on paper)² for improving the property, and, in practice, building a summer-house or two, cutting new walks in the wood, or composing 'a fish-pond that will hold ten carps.' Meanwhile, his health gradually declined, and, like Swift, he was troubled with deafness, a complaint which he whimsically said he had neglected while his head was in danger. He died, finally, of a lingering fever, at Lord Harley's seat of Wimpole, in Cambridge, where he was a frequent visitor, on the 18th September, 1721, being then in his fifty-eighth year,

¹ Powder'd Beef—salted beef.

² In James Gibbs's 'Book of Architecture,' 1728, is 'A Draught made for *Matthew Prior*, Esq.; to have been built at *Down Hall* in *Essex*.' Gibbs also designed Prior's monument in Westminster Abbey.

Eighteenth Century Studies

—a circumstance which did not prevent an admirer (Mr. Robert Ingram) from writing that:

‘HORACE and HE were call’d in haste,
From this vile Earth to Heaven;
The cruel year not fully pass’d,
Ætatis, Fifty-seven.’

A monument, for which ‘last piece of *Humane Vanity*’ he left five hundred pounds, was afterwards erected to him in Westminster Abbey. On it was placed a bust by Antoine Coysevox (oddly masquerading in his will as Coriveaux), which had been presented to him by Louis XIV., and, at his own desire, the inscription was intrusted to that incontinent epitaph-maker Dr. Robert Freind, of whose lengthy achievements in this line Pope said sarcastically, that one half would never be read and the other half would never be believed. In this instance, Freind’s record must have been more authoritative than usual, since it seems to have supplied no small portion of their material to Prior’s first biographers. Among other legacies, chiefly to friends—for only one relative is mentioned in the will—he left two hundred pounds’ worth of books ‘to the College of St. John the Evangelist, in Cambridge.’ These, which were to be kept in the library with some earlier gifts, included the ‘Poems’ of 1718, ‘in the greatest Paper.’ He also bequeathed to the college Lord Jersey’s portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud, together with the already mentioned picture of himself by Alexis-Simon Belle, in his ambassador’s robes.

Although, at last, it fell to another hand to write Prior’s epitaph, he had more than once, after the semi-morbid, semi-cynical fashion of his time, amused himself by attempting it. One of his essays:

‘To ME ’twas giv’n to die: to Thee ’tis giv’n
To live: Alas! one Moment sets us ev’n.
Mark! how impartial is the Will of Heaven!’—

is certainly superior to the lapidary efforts of either Pope or Gay on their own behalf. Another was doubtless the outcome of some moment when he felt more keenly than

Matthew Prior

usual the disparity between his position and his antecedents, as, for example, when that haughtiest of men, Lord Strafford, declined to act in the Utrecht Treaty with a person of so mean an extraction.

‘ Nobles and Heralds, by your leave,
Here lies what once was Matthew Prior;
The son of Adam and of Eve,
Can Bourbon or Nassau claim higher? ’¹

Among his posthumous verses there is also a poem headed ‘ For my own Monument,’ which, as he says he was fifty at the time of writing it, may be regarded as his last experiment in this line of literature. After referring to the fact that his bust by Coysevox is not only provided but paid for, and leaving the spectator to judge of its merit as a work of art, he bids him distrust what may be said in praise of the original, as the marble may lie:

‘ Yet counting as far as to FIFTY his years,
His virtues and vices were as other men’s are;
High hopes he conceiv’d, and he smother’d great fears,
In life party-colour’d, half pleasure, half care.’

¹ This is said to have been ‘ spoken extempore.’ It was more probably—like Goldsmith’s ‘ Ned Purdon ’—an adapted recollection, for there is an elder epitaph as follows:

‘ Johnnie Carnegie lais heer,
Descendit of Adam and Eve,
Gif ony can gang hieher,
I’se willing gie him leve.’

The independent spirit of Prior’s lines, however, is reflected in other parts of his work. Compare, for instance, the manly stanzas in ‘ The Old Gentry ’:

‘ But coronets we owe to crowns,
And favour to a court’s affection,
By nature we are ADAM’S sons,
And sons of ANSTIS by election.

‘ KINGSLE, eight hundred years have roll’d,
Since thy forefathers held the plow,
When this shall be in story told,
Add, That my kindred do so now.’

‘ Anstis ’ was Garter King at Arms. ‘ Venus shall give him Form,
and *Anstis* Birth ’—says Pope.

Eighteenth Century Studies

The next stanza—claiming that while neither

‘to business a drudge, nor to faction a slave
He strove to make int’rest and freedom agree,’—

may safely be assumed to describe Prior’s not very elevated character. As already implied, he had adopted his profession not because he was especially fitted for it, but because the ways were open; and if he prosecuted it with industry and gravity, it was also, in all likelihood, without conviction or enthusiasm. He was *not* ‘too fond of the right to pursue the expedient’ (as Goldsmith said of Burke), and though, personally, he may have approved the Partition Treaties as little as the Treaty of Utrecht,¹ he was doubtless philosophically satisfied, if he was able to extract an intelligible action from indefinite instructions. This saved him from the irritation and disappointment to which the dilatory and tortuous diplomacy of the time would have subjected a keener and more earnest spirit. As it was, while declining to be a drudge to business, he seems to have succeeded in retaining the respect of his employers, and, if equally unwilling to act the part of faction’s slave, he escaped much of the opprobrium incurred by others of his contemporaries, when, under Anne, he passed from one side to the other. Of his private life, such records as remain (and they are neither very abundant nor very authentic) exhibit him as witty and accessible, much addicted to punning, and an advanced convert to Swift’s play-day creed of ‘*Vive la bagatelle*.’ We get glimpses of him in the ‘Journal to Stella’—a spare, frail, solemn-faced man (‘*visage de bois*’ is Bolingbroke’s term) who had generally a cough, which he only called a cold, and who walked in the park to make himself fat, as Swift did for the opposite reason of making himself thin. Sometimes they dine at ‘Harley’s’ or ‘Masham’s’; sometimes sup with Peterborough or

¹ ‘MATTHEW, who knew the whole Intrigue,
Ne’er much approv’d That Mystic League.
In the vile UTRECHT TREATY too,
Poor Man, He found enough to do.’

The Conversation, 1720.

Matthew Prior

General Webb ('*trompette de Wynendael*!'); sometimes sit together by the fireside at the Smyrna in Pall Mall, 'receiving acquaintance.' Occasionally Prior entertains at his own house in Westminster, where the guests will be Atterbury and Arbuthnot, or a Lord Treasurer and a Secretary of State. 'If at the old hour of midnight after your drudgery,' he writes to Bolingbroke, 'a cold blade-bone of mutton in Duke Street will go down *sicut olim*, it, with all that belongs to the master of the house . . . is entirely yours.' At Westminster, too, met, now and then, that famous brotherhood of sixteen established by Bolingbroke 'to advance conversation and friendship, and to reward deserving persons.'

'Our Weekly Friends To-morrow meet
At MATTHEW'S Palace, in *Duke-street*;
To try for once, if They can Dine
On Bacon-Ham and Mutton-Chine'—

says one of Prior's invitations to Lord Oxford, and it goes on to add that 'Dorset us'd to bless the Roof.' If eighteenth-century gossip is to be trusted—and it was no more trustworthy than is modern society-scandal—the host was sometimes oppressed, after these elevated festivities, by a '*besoin de s'encanailler*,' and would stroll off to smoke a pipe and drink a bottle of ale with two humbler friends in Long Acre, a common soldier and his wife. But who knows? The author of 'Down-Hall' was manifestly a student of character. Perhaps the soldier was a humorist. Perhaps he had carried a halbert under 'my uncle Toby!' In any case, this of itself scarcely justifies Johnson in saying that Prior 'in his private relaxation revived the tavern,' by which he means the Rhenish Wine House. Unfortunately, there is strong ground for supposing that Prior's Nannettes and 'nut-brown maids' were by no means such unsubstantial personifications as the Glyceras and Lalages of his Roman exemplar; on the contrary, they were highly materialized human beings. When there is no Queensberry available,

'Tis from a Handmaid we must take a Helen,'

says Pope, in his epistle to Martha Blount. We have

Eighteenth Century Studies

the express authority of Arbuthnot and others for believing that Prior's defective morality accepted the alternative without troubling itself about the transformation. Certainly, he cannot claim to have shown even the fortunate discrimination of Xanthias the Phocian. But it is needless to enlarge upon the chapter of his admitted frailties. It is pleasanter to think of him as the friendly, genial, companionable man, whom two generations of Dorsets and Oxfords delighted to honour, and whom the Duchess of Portland, the 'noble, lovely, little Peggy' of one of his most charming minor pieces, described as making 'himself beloved by every living thing in the house—master, child, and servant, human creature, or animal.'¹

Like Pope, Prior must have 'lisp'd in numbers.' 'I remember,' he says, in some MSS. which once belonged to the above mentioned Duchess, and were first printed by Malone, 'nothing farther in life, than that I made verses,'² and he adds that he had rhymed on Guy of Warwick and killed Colborn, the giant, before he was big enough for Westminster. But 'two accidents in youth' effectively prevented him from being 'quite possessed with the muse.' In the first place, at his Cambridge college, prose was more in fashion than verse, and, in the second, he went promptly to the Hague, where 'he had enough to do in studying his French and Dutch, and altering his Terentian and original style into that of Articles and Convention.' All this made poetry less the business than the amusement of his life; and, as to satire, that was too hazardous a diversion for a circumspect placeman, who, by a fresh turn of the wheel, might find himself suddenly at the mercy of a new ministry. Hence, in his capacity of plenipotentiary and ambassador, Prior seems to have studiously deprecated the serious profession of poetry. In his witty heroics to Boileau after Blenheim, he writes:

' I ne'er was Master of the tuneful Trade:
Or the small Genius which my Youth could boast,
In Prose and Business lyes extinct and lost;'

¹ Lady Louisa Stuart in Lady M. Wortley Montagu's 'Works' by Lord Wharncliffe, 1837, i. 63.

² 'Prose Works of Dryden,' 1800, i. 545-6.

Matthew Prior

and in the prose preface to his pseudo-Spenserian Ode to Queen Anne after Ramillies, he says that it is long since he has, or at least ought to have, quitted Parnassus. Three years later, in the preface to his first collection of 1709, he again characterizes his essays in verse as 'Publick Panegyrics, Amorous Odes, Serious Reflections, or Idle Tales, the Product of his leisure Hours, who had commonly Business enough upon his Hands, and was only a Poet by Accident.' Whatever affectation there may have been in all this, the facts show that, dating from his first successful variation upon Exodus, more than twenty years elapsed before he ventured to collect, from Dryden's 'Miscellanies' and elsewhere, the scattered material of his earlier volume. It is notable, also, that the largest levy is from the fifth 'Miscellany' of 1704, when he was probably least occupied as a diplomatist, and it seems, besides, that his ingathering would have been smaller, and more eclectic, had not many of his pieces been reprinted very incorrectly in 1707, without his knowledge.¹ Publication was, therefore, forced upon him, and he was obliged, as he says, to put forth 'an indifferent Collection of Poems, for fear of being thought the Author of a worse.' In the closing words of his dedication to Lord Dorset, he refers to some attempts 'of a very different Nature (the Product of my severer Studies),' which he destines for a future book. One of these must obviously have been the long-incubated 'Solomon,' which, with the subsequently written 'Alma,' and a number of epigrams and minor pieces, make up the chief additions to the *folio* of 1718. 'Down-Hall' and 'The Conversation,' which belong to a later date, are, of necessity, absent from the tall volume, but, in default of satisfactory explanation, it is certainly a curious instance of paternal blindness, or untoward accident, that three of the poems by which the author is best known to

¹ A second unauthorized collection appeared in 1716, which he expressly repudiated by notice in the 'London Gazette' for March 24 in that year. The subject is too large for discussion here; but both probably contained certain pieces which Prior—in Pope's words—'thought it prudent to disown.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

posterity, 'The Secretary,' 'The Female Phaeton,' and the incomparable 'Child of Quality,' are not to be found in its pages.¹ Nor do those pages include the dialogue of 'Daphne and Apollo,' which Pope told Spence pleased him as much as anything he had ever read of Prior's. These omissions are the more significant because Prior is known to have 'kept everything by him, even to all his school exercises.'²

With Prior's longest and most ambitious poem, the common consent of modern criticism has made it needless to linger. That he himself should have preferred 'Solomon on the Vanity of the World' to his other works, need surprise no one who is acquainted with literary history. 'What do you tell me of my "Alma"?' said its author petulantly to Pope (whose opinion he had asked on 'Solomon'), '—a loose and hasty scribble, to relieve the tedious hours of my imprisonment, while in the messenger's hand.'³ But the couplet already quoted from 'The Conversation' proves that, by 1720, he had recognized that others were in accord with Pope. There is a letter in Pope's 'Correspondence' which shows that Prior sent him 'The Conversation,' perhaps—may we not suppose?—with the vague hope that Pope might soften or reverse his verdict.⁴ But Pope's reply abides in generalities, and gives no sign that he had altered his judgment—a judgment which the majority of subsequent critics have unhesitatingly confirmed. If readers like John Wesley and Cowper thought highly of 'Solomon,' it must be concluded that what they admired was rather the wise king's wisdom than Prior's rendering of it. Johnson himself admits that it is wearisome, and Johnson, whose 'lax talking' and perverse criticism have done Prior so much wrong, may, perhaps, upon this point of

¹ 'The Female Phaeton' was only published in 1718, and perhaps was written too late to be included in the volume, which, by a letter from Prior to Swift, was 'quite printed off' on 25 September, 1718. But the 'Child of Quality' appeared in vol. v. of Dryden's 'Miscellanies,' as far back as 1704.

² Spence's 'Anecdotes' by Singer, 2nd ed., 1858, p. 36.

³ Ruffhead's 'Life of Pope,' 1769, p. 482 n.

⁴ Vol. v. (1886), Pope to Prior, February, 1720.

Matthew Prior

wearisomeness, be admitted to speak with some authority.
The presence of one quotable couplet—

‘ ABRA was ready e’er I call’d her Name;
And tho’ I call’d another, ABRA came ’—

can no more secure its immortality than—

‘ Fine by Degrees, and beautifully less ’

(which Pope copied in his—

‘ Fine by defect, and delicately weak ’)

can revitalize the hopeless dried-specimen into which Prior flattened out the fine old ballad of ‘ The Nut-Brown Maid.’ In the more leisurely age of country book-clubs, it is conceivable that even ‘ Solomon ’ and ‘ Henry and Emma ’ may have gone soothingly to the gentle bubbling of Mrs. Unwin’s tea-urn, or even to the rumble of John Wesley’s coach wheels on a dusty posting road between London and Bristol; but to-day, when the hurrying reader must ask rigorously of everything, Is this personal to the author?—Is it what he, and he alone, can give me?—such efforts as Prior’s masterpiece (in his own opinion), and his useless paraphrase of simpler and sincerer work, fall irretrievably into the limbo of mistaken *tours de force*.¹

¹ Cowper justly praises the execution of ‘ Solomon,’ and, as no recent writer seems to have dared to give a serious quotation from the poem, the following may serve as a specimen:

‘ To the late Revel, and protracted Feast
Wild Dreams succeeded, and disorder’d Rest;
And as at Dawn of Morn fair Reason’s Light
Broke thro’ the Fumes and Phantoms of the Night;
What had been said, I ask’d my Soul, what done;
How flow’d our Mirth, and whence the Source begun?
Perhaps the Jest that charm’d the sprightly Croud,
And made the Jovial Table laugh so loud,
To some false Notion ow’d it’s poor Pretence,
To an ambiguous Word’s perverted Sense,
To a wild Sonnet, or a wanton Air,
Offence and Torture to the sober Ear.
Perhaps, alas! the pleasing Stream was brought
From this Man’s Error, from another’s Fault;
From Topics which Good-nature would forget,
And Prudence mention with the last Regret.’

(Pleasure: *The Second Book*.)

From all of which it may be concluded that after-dinner talk, ‘ in halls of Lebanonian cedar,’ differed but little from after-dinner talk, *temp*. Anne and Victoria.

Eighteenth Century Studies

With the 'loose and hasty scribble' of 'Alma' the case is different. Here, to use his own words, 'the Man We talk with is MAT. PRIOR,' and he talks in his own inimitable way. The piece or fragment—a discursive dialogue upon the locality of the soul, carried on between the author and Dick Shelton, the 'dear Friend, and old Companion' of his Will,—has no perceptible plan; and its ultimate morality is very much the 'Begone, dull Care,' and 'Pass the Rosy Wine' of that more modern philosopher, Mr. Richard Swiveller. But it is not to be read for its argument, or for that meaning which Goldsmith failed to grasp, but for its delightfully-wayward digressions, its humour and its good-humour, its profusion of epigram and happy illustration. Butler—though Cowper doubted it—is plainly Prior's model, the difference being in the men and not in the measure. Indeed, the fact is evident from the express reference to Butler in the opening lines of Canto ii.:

'But shall we take the MUSE abroad,
To drop her idly on the Road?
And leave our Subject in the middle;
As BUTLER did his Bear and Fiddle?
Yet He, consummate Master, knew
When to recede, and where pursue:
His noble Negligences teach,
What Others' Toils despair to reach.
He, perfect Dancer, climbs the Rope,
And balances your Fear and Hope:
If, after some distinguish'd Leap,
He drops his Pole, and seems to slip;
Straight gath'ring all his active Strength,
He rises higher half his Length.
With Wonder You approve his Slight;
And owe your Pleasure to your Fright.
But, like poor ANDREW, I advance,
False *Mimic* of my Master's Dance:
Around the Cord a while I sprawl;
And thence, tho' low, in earnest fall.'

Prior here, naturally, and not unbecomingly, since his object is to eulogize the author of 'Hudibras,' underrates his own powers. He may, as Johnson says, 'want the bullion of his master,' but, in the foregoing passage, he is praising his art, and in the art of Hudibrastic or octosyllabic verse he himself is second to none. As it happens,

Matthew Prior

the excellence of his achievement in this way is almost scientifically demonstrable. Among Pope's works is usually included an imitation of Horace's 'Hoc erat in votis' (Satire vi. bk. ii.), the first half of which is Swift's, the rest being by Pope. Criticism has not failed to make the comparison which such a combination inevitably suggests. Swift was copying Butler; Pope was copying Swift. But each gives the measure something of his individual quality: Swift makes it easier, more direct, more idiomatic; Pope, more pointed, more sparkling, more elegant. If any one will take the trouble to study the Swift-*cum*-Pope collaboration, and then read a page of Prior at his best, he will, in all probability, speedily arrive at the conclusion that, in craftsmanship, at all events, Prior combines the more distinctive characteristics of both. He is as easy as Swift and as polished as Pope.

With this mastery over a vehicle so especially fitted for humorous narrative, it is scarcely surprising that he turned his attention to the 'Tale,' which, in the England under Anne, passed for the equivalent of the technically-admirable 'Conte' of La Fontaine. His skill in simile and illustration, his faculty for profusely embroidering a borrowed theme, his freedom and perspicuity, and notwithstanding his own disclaimer, his unfailing instinct 'when to recede, and where pursue,'—all qualified him excellently for the task. Whether he succeeded in actually rivalling his model, is debatable (Pope thought that Vanbrugh in his 'Fables' went farther),¹ but there is no doubt that Prior's essays in this direction were among his most popular performances. 'Prior tells a story in verse the most agreeable that ever I knew,' writes Lord Raby to Stepney, in 1705, and he spoke no more than the general sentiment of his contemporaries.² Unhappily, the coarse themes of the three principal tales Prior wrote

¹ Ruffhead's 'Life of Pope,' 1769, p. 494 n.

² Fenton, for example, imitating Chaucer:

'Ryghte wele areeds Dan Prior's song,
A tale shold never be too long;
And sikerly in fayre Englonde
None bett doth taling understond.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

make it impossible to recommend what, in their way, are masterpieces of witty and familiar narrative. Even in the days when Hannah More read 'Tom Jones,' and Miss Fanny Burney carried Evelina to Congreve's 'Love for Love,' it was not without expostulation that Goldsmith was permitted to insert 'The Ladle' and 'Hans Carvel' in the 'Beauties of English Poesy,' and though Johnson at a moment of paradoxical opposition to the censure of Lord Hailes, contended that there was nothing objectionable in 'Paulo Purganti,' it would be a bold editor who, nowadays, should include it in a popular collection. The loss, nevertheless, is a serious one, for which the attempts of Gay, of Somerville, of Goldsmith even, cannot wholly compensate us, and certainly not those of the once-celebrated Mr. Charles Denis of the 'St. James's Magazine,' concerning whose absolutely forgotten versions of the French fabulist admiring contemporaries affirmed that they were

'not mere translation,
But LA FONTAINE by transmigration.'

There are, it is true, one or two other poems of Prior's which are designated 'Tales.' But one of the best of these, 'The Conversation,' is rather an incident than a story, and the claim of most of the rest to their rank is not strong. On the other hand, we may take advantage of the tale-like title of another piece, 'An English Padlock,' to cite its closing lines—lines which prove with what unalloyed good sense Prior could counsel an English Arnolphe in tribulation over an English Agnès:

'Dear angry Friend, what must be done?
Is there no Way?—There is but One.
Send Her abroad; and let Her see
That all this mingled Mass, which She,
Being forbidden longs to know,
Is a dull Farce, an empty Show,
Powder, and Pocket-Glass, and Beau;
A Staple of Romance and Lies,
False Tears, and real Perjuries:
Where Sighs and Looks are bought and sold,
And Love is made but to be told: . . .
And Youth seduc'd from Friends and Fame,
Must give up Age to Want and Shame.

Matthew Prior

Let her behold the Frantick Scene,
The Women wretched, false the Men;
And when, these certain Ills to shun,
She would to Thy Embraces run;
Receive Her with extended Arms:
Seem more delighted with her Charms:
Wait on Her to the Park and Play:
Put on good Humour; make Her gay:
Be to her Virtues very kind:
Be to her Faults a little blind:
Let all her Ways be unconfin'd:
And clap your PADLOCK—on her Mind.'

It is not, however, by 'Alma,' or his tales and episodes, but by his lighter pieces, that Prior escapes the Libitina of letters. His clear and compact expression makes him one of the best of English epigrammatists. Could anything, for example, be neater than this?—

'Yes, every Poet is a Fool:
By Demonstration NED can show it:
Happy, cou'd NED's inverted Rule
Prove every Fool to be a Poet.'

The same may be said of the cognate imitation of Martial, 'To John I ow'd great Obligation,' and the quatrains entitled 'The Remedy worse than the Disease.' Here again is a less known essay in another fashion, which, for mere *facture*, could scarcely be bettered:

'When BIRBO thought fit from the world to retreat,
As full of Champagne as an egg's full of meat,
He wak'd in the boat, and to CHARON he said,
He wou'd be row'd back, for he was not yet dead.
Trim the boat, and sit quiet, stern CHARON reply'd;
You may have forgot, you were drunk when you dy'd.'

It is a pity that so many of his productions of this kind turn wholly upon the decay of beauty and the tragedies of the toilet. But among them, there is one little version from Plato, which Landor might have been proud to sign:

'VENUS, take my Votive Glass:
Since I am not what I was;
What from this Day I shall be,
VENUS, let Me never see.'¹

¹ According to Dr. Garnett ('Idylls and Epigrams,' 1869),

Eighteenth Century Studies

This variation upon an antique model naturally leads one to speak of Prior's classical, or rather mythological verses. In these he is most genuine where he is most modern, or, in other words, revives rather the manner than the matter of Greece and Rome. His 'Cloe Hunting,' 'Cloe Weeping,' 'Love Disarm'd' belong to those mere wax-flowers of rhyme at which Swift sneered in 'Apollo's Edict.' But where, depending mainly or wholly upon his personal impressions, he only allows his classical memories to clarify his style, his efforts are altogether charming. What, for instance, could be lighter, jauntier, more natural, than two of the stanzas of 'A Case Stated,' one of his posthumously printed pieces:

'While I pleaded with passion how much I deserv'd,
For the pains and the torments for more than a year;
She look'd in an Almanack, whence she observ'd,
That it wanted a fortnight to BARTLEMEW-FAIR.

'My COWLEY, and WALLER, how vainly I quote,
While my negligent judge only Hears with her Eye,
In a long flaxen-wig, and embroider'd new coat,
Her spark saying nothing talks better than I.'

Purists might object that 'deserv'd' and 'observ'd' are not rhymes. But in this, as in the couplet in 'Alma'—

'And what shall of thy Woods remain,
Except the Box that threw the Main?'—

Prior would probably have quoted the precedent of the French. The same qualities of elegance and facility which distinguish the above verses, are to be found in several other well-known pieces. Such are the lines beginning 'Dear Cloe, how blubber'd is that pretty Face' (from which Tom Moore learnt so much), 'A

Voltaire, borrowing something from Julian the Egyptian, has extended this idea:

*'Je le donne à Vénus, puisqu'elle est toujours belle;
Il redouble trop mes ennuis.
Je ne saurais me voir, dans ce miroir fidèle,
Ni telle que j'étais, ni telle que je suis.'*

'Puisqu'elle est toujours belle'—happily enhances the pathos of the offering.

Matthew Prior

Lover's Anger,' 'A Simile,' 'The Secretary,' and half-a-dozen others—not forgetting 'The Female Phaeton,' that charming compliment to the radiant girlish beauty of Catherine Hyde, already referred to in an earlier series of these papers.¹

Among the remaining efforts of Prior's muse may be mentioned 'The Garland,' 'The Question, to Lisetta,' 'Her Right Name,' the verses to Charles Montagu, those beginning 'Spare, Gen'rous Victor, spare the Slave,' and 'The Merchant, to secure his Treasure—' to which last Mr. Palgrave has given the currency of the 'Golden Treasury.' Nor should be omitted the Horatian verses in Robbe's 'Geography,' or those in Mezeray's 'History,' sacred for ever by their connection with Walter Scott. Not long before the end, his biographer tells us, when on a border tour, two broken soldiers met him, and one of them, recognizing the Laird, bade 'God bless him.' Scott looked after their retreating figures, and, 'planting his stick firmly on the sod,' repeated Prior's verses 'without break or hesitation.' They turn on that clinging love of life, which outlives so much, and Lockhart saw plainly that the speaker applied them to himself. Here is the last stanza:

'The Man in graver Tragic known
(Tho' his best Part long since was done)
Still on the Stage desires to tarry:
And He who play'd the *Harlequin*,
After the Jest still loads the Scene,
Unwilling to retire, tho' weary.'²

But the crown of Prior's achievement is certainly the poem 'To a Child of Quality,' which has won from Mr. Swinburne the praise of being 'the most adorable of nursery idyls that ever was or will be in our language.' We shall not do the reader the wrong of quoting it, but will close our list with another less-known and post-

¹ 'Prior's "Kitty"' in 'Eighteenth Century Vignettes,' 1892, pp. 19-30.

² Lockhart's 'Life of Scott,' chap. lxxx. Sir Walter seems to have known Prior by heart, for this came at the end of a long string of quotations from 'Alina' and 'Solomon.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

anonymously-printed address (dated April 9, 1720) to a little girl, who was the daughter of the poet's friend, Edward Harley, and afterwards became Duchess of Portland:

' My noble, lovely, little PEGGY,
Let this, my FIRST-EPISTLE, beg ye,
At dawn of morn, and close of even,
To lift your heart and hands to heaven:
In double beauty say your pray'r,
Our father first, then *notre père*;
And, dearest CHILD, along the day,
In ev'ry thing you do and say,
Obey and please my LORD and LADY,
So GOD shall love, and ANGELS aid, Ye.

If to these PRECEPTS You attend,
No SECOND-LETTER need I send,
And so I rest Your constant Friend,
M. P.'

O si sic omnia dixisset! If he had oftener written as he has written of these two 'children of quality,'—if he had now and then written of women as reverently,—how large would have been his portion in our anthologies! As it is, he has left behind him not a few pieces which have never yet been equalled for grace, ease, good-humour, and spontaneity, and which are certain of immortality while there is any saving virtue in 'fame's great antiseptic—style.'

THE LATEST LIFE OF STEELE

ONE of the things that most pleased Lord Macaulay in connection with his famous article in the 'Edinburgh' on Miss Aikin's 'Life of Addison,' was the confirmation of a minor statement which he had risked upon internal evidence. He had asserted confidently that Addison could never have spoken of Steele in the 'Old Whig' as 'Little Dickey'; and by a stroke of good fortune, a few days after his article appeared, he found the evidence he required. At a bookstall in Holborn he happened upon Chetwood's 'History of the Stage,' and presently discovered that 'Little Dickey' was the nickname of Henry Norris, a diminutive actor who had made his first appearance as 'Dicky' in Farquhar's 'Constant Couple.' Norris—it may be added—must have been a familiar figure to both Addison and Steele, because, besides taking a female part in 'The Funeral,' he had played Mr. Tipkin in 'The Tender Husband,' which contained 'many applauded strokes' from Addison's hand; and, only three years before Addison wrote the 'Old Whig,' had also acted in Addison's own comedy of 'The Drummer.' But the anecdote, with its tardy exposure of a time-honoured blunder, aptly illustrates the main function of the modern biographer who deals with the great men of the last century. Rightly or wrongly—no doubt rightly as regards their leading characteristics—a certain conception of them has passed into currency, and it is no longer practicable to alter it materially. A 'new view,' if sufficiently ingenious or paradoxical, may appear to hold its own for a moment, but, as a rule, it lasts no longer. Swift, Addison, Pope, Steele, Fielding, Goldsmith, Johnson, remain essentially what the common consent of the past has left them, and the utmost that latter-day industry can effect lies in the

Eighteenth Century Studies

rectification of minute facts, and the tracing out of neglected threads of inquiry. Especially may it concern itself with that literary *nettoyage à sec* which has for its object the attenuation, and, if possible, the entire dispersing, of doubtful or discreditable tradition.

Of this method of biography, the 'Life of Steele,'¹ by Mr. George A. Aitken, is a favourable, and even typical, example. That Mr. Aitken is an enthusiast is plain; but he is also an enthusiast of exceptional patience, acuteness, and tenacity of purpose. He manifestly set out determined to know all that could possibly be known about Steele, and for some five years (to judge by his first advertisements) he laboured unweariedly at his task. The mere authorities referred to in his notes constitute an ample literature of the period, while the consultation of registers, the rummaging of records, and the general disturbance of contemporary pamphlets and documents which his inquiries must obviously have entailed, are fairly enough to take one's breath away. That in these days of hasty research and hastier publication such a train of investigation should have been undertaken at all, is remarkable; that so prolonged and arduous an effort should have been selected as the diploma work of a young and previously untried writer, is more remarkable still. It would have been discouraging in the last degree if so much industry and perseverance had been barren of result, and it is satisfactory to find that Mr. Aitken has been fortunate enough to add considerably to the existing material respecting Steele. In the pages that follow it is proposed, not so much to recapitulate Steele's story, as to emphasise, in their order, some of the more important discoveries which are due to his latest biographer.

Richard Steele, as we know already, was born at Dublin in March, 1672 (N. S.), being thus about six weeks older than Addison, who first saw the light in the following May. Beyond some vague references in 'The Tatler,' nothing definite has hitherto been ascertained about his parents,

¹ 'The Life of Richard Steele.' By George A. Aitken, 2 vols. London: Isbister, 1889.

The Latest Life of Steele

although his father (also Richard Steele) was reported to have been a lawyer. But the fact is now established that one Richard Steele, of Mountain (Monkstown), an attorney, was married in 1670 to a widow named Elinor Symes. These were Steele's father and mother. Steele himself tells us ('Tatler,' No. 181) that the former died when he was 'not quite five years of age,' and his mother, apparently, did not long survive her husband. The boy fell into the charge of his uncle, Henry Gascoigne, secretary to the first and second Dukes of Ormond, who had married a sister of one of Steele's parents. Through Ormond's influence his nephew was placed, in November, 1684, upon the foundation at the Charterhouse. Two years later he was joined there by Addison. It was then the reign of Dr. Thomas Walker, afterwards 'the ingenious T. W.' of the 'Spectator,' but nothing has been recovered as to Steele's school-days. In November, 1689, he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, with the usual exhibition of a boy on the Charterhouse foundation, and he matriculated in March, 1690,—Addison, then a demy at Magdalen, having preceded him. Letters already printed by Mr. Wills and others show that Steele tried hard for a studentship at Christ Church; but eventually he became a post-master at Merton, his college-tutor being Dr. Welbore Ellis, to whom he subsequently refers in the preface to the 'Christian Hero.' Of his intercourse with Addison at Smithfield and Oxford no record has come to light, and it is therefore still open to the essayist to piece the imperfections of this period by fictitious scores with the apple-woman or imaginary musings on the Merton terraces. But, in any such excursions in search of the picturesque, the fact that Steele was older instead of younger than Addison cannot safely be disregarded.

Why Richard Steele quitted the University to become a 'gentleman of the army' still remains obscure. His University career, if not brilliant, had been respectable, and he left Merton with the love of 'the whole Society.' Perhaps, like his compatriot Goldsmith, he preferred a red coat to a black one. At all events, in 1694, his

Eighteenth Century Studies

restless Irish spirit prompted him to enlist as a cadet in the second troop of Horse Guards, then commanded by his uncle's patron, James Butler, second Duke of Ormond. When he thus 'mounted a war-horse, with a great sword in his hand, and planted himself behind King William the Third against Lewis the Fourteenth' he lost (he says) the succession to a very good estate in the county of Wexford in Ireland; for which, failing further particulars, we may perhaps provisionally read 'castle in Spain.' His next appearance was among the crowd of minstrels who, in black-framed *folio*, mourned Queen Mary's death. Already he had written verse, and had even burned an entire comedy at college. The chief interest, however, of 'The Procession,' which was the particular name of this particular 'melodious tear,' was its diplomatic dedication to John, Lord Cutts, himself a versifier, and what was more important, also the newly appointed colonel of the Coldstream Guards. Cutts speedily sought out his anonymous panegyrist, took him into his household, and eventually offered him a standard in his regiment. There is evidence, in the shape of transcripts from the Blenheim MSS., that Steele was acting as Cutts' secretary *circa* 1696-7 (a circumstance of which, by the way, there is confirmation in Carleton's 'Memoirs'¹); and it has hitherto been supposed that by his employer's interest—or Cutts gave him little but patronage—he became captain in Lucas's Fusileers. Here, however, Mr. Aitken's cautious method discloses an unsuspected error. Steele is spoken of as a captain as early as 1700, and 'Lord Lucas's Regiment of Foot' (not specifically 'Fusileers') was only raised in February, 1702. If, therefore, before this date Steele had any right to the title of captain, it must have been as captain in the Coldstream Guards. Unfortunately, all efforts to trace him in the records of that regiment have hitherto proved unsuccessful. Neither

¹ 'At the time appointed' (says Carleton, writing at the date of the Assassination Plot of 1696) 'I waited on his lordship [Lord Cutts], where I met Mr. Steel (now Sir Richard, and at that time is secretary), who immediately introduced me.' ('Memoirs' 728, ch. iii.)

The Latest Life of Steele

as captain nor as ensign could its historian, General MacKinnon, though naturally watchful on the point, find any mention of his name.

By 1700 the former post-master of Merton had become a seasoned man about town, a recognized wit, and an habitual frequenter of Will's. 'Dick Steel is yours,' writes Congreve to a friend early in the year. Already, too, there are indications that he had begun to feel the 'want of pence which vexes public men.' From this, however, as well as his part in the coffee-house crusade against Dryden's 'Quack Maurus,' Blackmore, we must pass to the next rectification. That Steele fought a duel is already known. That it was forced upon him, that he endeavoured in every honourable way to evade it, and that finally, by misadventure, he all but killed his man, have been often circumstantially related. But the date of the occurrence has always been a mystery. Calling Luttrell and the 'Flying-Post' to his aid, Mr. Aitken has ascertained that the place was Hyde Park, the time June 16, 1700, and the other principal an Irishman, named Kelly. Luttrell's description of Steele as 'Capt. Steele, of the Lord Cutts regiment,' is confirmatory of the assumption that he was a captain in the Guards. Whether this was his only 'affair of honour,' or whether there were others, is doubtful; but it is not improbable that the repentant spirit engendered by this event, for his adversary's life long hung trembling in the balance, is closely connected with the publication, if not the preparation, of the 'Christian Hero,' which made its appearance a few months later. Upon the scheme of this curious and by no means uninteresting manual, once so nearly forgotten as to be described as a poem, it is not necessary to linger now. But it may be noted that it was dated from the Tower Guard, where it was written, and that the governor of the Tower was the Lord Lucas in whose regiment Steele became an officer.

The year of which the first months witnessed the publication of the 'Christian Hero' witnessed in its close the production of Steele's first play, and, inconsequently

Eighteenth Century Studies

enough, the one was the cause of the other. It was an almost inevitable result of the book that many of the author's former associates were alienated from him, while others, not nicely sensitive to the distinction drawn in Boileau's *ami de la vertu plutôt que vertueux*, maliciously contrasted his precepts with his practice. Finding himself 'slighted' (he says) 'instead of being encouraged, for his declarations as to religion,' it became 'incumbent upon him to enliven his character, for which reason he writ the comedy called "The Funeral," in which (though full of incidents that move laughter) Virtue and Vice appear just as they ought to do.' In other words, Steele endeavoured to swell that tide of reformation which Collier had set flowing by his 'Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage,' and he followed up his first effort of 1701 by the 'Lying Lover' (1703) and the 'Tender Husband' (1705), the second of which was avowedly written 'in the severity Collier required.' His connection with the purification of the contemporary drama, however, would lead us too far from the special subject of this paper,—the revised facts of his biography. Among these, the order of the plays as given above is an important item. Owing to some traditional misconception, the 'Lying Lover,' which was a rather over-emphatic protest against duelling, was believed by all the older writers to be the last of Steele's early dramatic efforts. As a natural consequence, its being 'damned for its piety' was made responsible for the author's long abstinence from the task of theatrical regeneration. Unfortunately for logic, the facts which, in this instance, Mr. Aitken has extended rather than discovered, are diametrically opposed to any such convenient arrangement. The 'Tender Husband,' and not the 'Lying Lover,' was the last of Steele's first three plays,—that is to say, the moralized Collier mixture was succeeded by a strong infusion of Molière, while, so far from leaving off writing for the stage, there is abundant evidence that, but for other cares and more absorbing occupations, Steele would speedily have proceeded to

The Latest Life of Steele

'enliven his character' with a fresh comedy. Indeed, in a very instructive suit against Christopher Rich of Drury Lane, preserved among the Chancery Pleadings in the Record Office, mention is made of what may well have been the performance in question. It was to have treated a subject essayed both by Gay and Mrs. Centlivre, the 'Election of Gotham.'

The Chancery suit above referred to, which arose out of the profits of the 'Tender Husband,' began in 1707. Early in 1702 Steele had become a captain in Lucas's, and between that date and 1704 must have spent a considerable portion of his time at Landguard Fort, doing garrison duty with his company. He lodged, according to report, in a farmhouse at Walton. Mr. Aitken prints from various sources several new letters which belong to this period, together with some account of another in the long series of lawsuits about money with which Steele's biography begins to be plentifully besprinkled. In an autograph now in the Morrison collection, we find him certifying with Addison to the unimpeachable character of one 'Margery Maplesden, late Sutler at the Tilt-yard Guard,' and we get passing glances of him at the Kit Cat Club and elsewhere. Perhaps we are right, too, in placing about this date the account of his search for the 'philosopher's stone.' The details of this episode in his career rest mainly upon the narrative of Mrs. de la Rivière Manley, the author of that 'cornucopia of scandal,' the 'New Atalantis'; but there is little doubt that there was ground for the story, since Steele himself, in later life, printed, without contradiction, a reference to it in 'Town Talk,' and it is besides connected with the next of Mr. Aitken's discoveries. According to 'Rivella,' an empiric who found the sanguine Steele 'a bubble to his mind,' engaged him in the pursuit of the *magnum arcanum*. Furnaces were built without delay, and Steele's available resources began to vanish rapidly. In these transactions Mrs. Manley's husband played an ambiguous part, and, if we are to believe her, she herself impersonated the *Dea ex machina*, and warned Steele that he was being

Eighteenth Century Studies

duped. It was not too soon. He only just saved his last negotiable property, his commission, and had to go into hiding. 'Fortune,' Mrs. Manley continues, 'did more for him in his adversity than would have lain in her way in prosperity; she threw him to seek for refuge in a house where was a lady with very large possessions; he married her, she settled all upon him, and died soon after.'

This—and to some extent it is a corroboration of the story—was Steele's first wife, hitherto little more than a shifting shadow in his biography. She is now clearly proved to have been a West Indian widow called Margaret Stretch, who had inherited an estate in Barbados of £850 a year from her brother, Major Ford. Steele married her in the spring of 1705, and buried her two years later. There is some indication that her death was caused by a fright given her (when *enceinte*) by Steele's only sister, who was insane; but upon this point nothing definite can be affirmed. Looking to the circumstances in which (as narrated by Mrs. Manley) the acquaintanceship began, it is not improbable that the personal charms of the lady had less to do with the marriage than the *beaux yeux de sa cassette*. In any case Steele can scarcely escape the imputation which usually attaches to the union of a needy bachelor with a wealthy widow, and, as will be seen, he was not long inconsolable.

Whether, even at the time of the marriage, the Barbados estate was really productive of much ready money may be doubted. But in August, 1706, Steele was appointed Gentleman Waiter to Queen Anne's consort, Prince George of Denmark, and a few weeks after his wife's death, through the recommendation of Arthur Mainwaring, one of the members of the Kit Cat Club, Harley, then a Secretary of State, gave him the post of Gazetteer with an increased salary of £300 a year. 'The writer of the "Gazette" now,' says Hearne in May, 1707, 'is Captain Steele, who is the author of several romantic things, and is accounted an ingenious man.' As 'Captain Steele' he continued for many years to be known, but it is assumed that he left the army before his second marriage,

The Latest Life of Steele

which now followed. At his first wife's funeral had arrived as mourner a lady of about nine and twenty, the daughter of a deceased gentleman of Wales, and the Miss Mary Scurlock who has since become historical as the 'Prue' of the well-known Steele letters in the British Museum. That she was an heiress, and, as Mrs. Manley says, a 'cried-up beauty,' was known, though in the absence of express pictorial assurance of the latter fact, it has hitherto been difficult to see her with the admiring eyes of the enthusiastic writer who signs himself her 'most obsequious obedient husband.' But while unable to add greatly to our knowledge of her character, Mr. Aitken has succeeded in discovering and copying her portrait by Kneller, a portrait which sufficiently justifies her husband's raptures. In Sir Godfrey's 'animated canvas,' she is shown as a very beautiful brunette, in a cinnamon satin dress, with a high, almost too high, forehead, and dark brilliant eyes. Steele's phrase 'little wife' must have been a 'dear diminutive,' for she is not especially *petite*. On the contrary she is rather what may fairly be described as a fine woman, and she has an arch, humorous expression, which suggests the wit with which she is credited. From the absence of a ring it has been conjectured that the portrait was taken before marriage. But Kneller was much more likely to have painted Mrs. Steele than Miss Scurlock, and the simple explanation may be either that rings were neglected or that the hands were painted in from a model. As in the case of Mrs. Stretch, Mr. Aitken has collected a mass of information about Mrs. Steele's relations. His good luck has also helped him to one veritable find. In her letter to her mother announcing her engagement, Miss Scurlock refers scornfully to a certain 'wretched impudence, H.O.,' who had recently written to her. This was manifestly a rejected but still importunate suitor, although the precise measure of his implied iniquity remained unrevealed. It seems that his name was Henry Owen of Glassalt, Carmarthenshire, and that he was an embarrassed widower of (in the circuitous language

Eighteenth Century Studies

of the law) 'thirty, thirty-five, or forty years of age at the most'—that is to say, he was over forty. Miss Scurlock had known him as a neighbour from childhood, and for four or five years past, at Bath, at London, and at other places, he, being a needy man with an entailed estate, had been bombarding her with his addresses. Only two years before her engagement to Steele, finding her obdurate, he had trumped up a suit against her for breach of contract of marriage, which apparently was not successful. The 'Libel' and 'Answer,' printed from the records of the Consistorial Court of London, are more curious than edifying, and tend to show that Owen was rather a cur. But the whole story is useful indirectly as suggesting that Miss Scurlock's constitutional prudery was not the only reason why she surrounded Steele's worship of her with so much mystery. Abhorrence of 'public doings' in 'changing the name of lover for husband' was certainly superficially justifiable in the circumstances. A gentleman who had brought a suit against her in 1704 for breach of contract, and was still pestering her in August, 1707, with his unpalatable attentions, was quite capable of putting awkward obstacles in the way of that other ardent wooer from Lord Sunderland's office in Whitehall, who, in order to pay his court to 'the beautifullest object in the world,' was confessedly neglecting the 'Gazette' and the latest news from Ostend.

According to the licence the marriage was to have taken place at St. Margaret's, Westminster; but the registers of that church, as well as those of St. James's, Piccadilly, and St. Martin's - in - the - Fields, have been fruitlessly searched for the record, and it is clear that, for some days, the ceremony was kept a secret, pending the arrival from Wales of Mrs. Scurlock's consent. It probably took place on the 9th of September, 1707, the day after the licence was granted. In the previous month of August, Steele had rented a house, now no longer standing, in Bury Street, close to the turning out of Jermyn Street. This was a quarter of the town described by contemporary advertisements as in close proximity 'to St. James's

The Latest Life of Steele

Church, Chapel, Park, Palace, Coffee and Chocolate Houses'—in other words, in was in the very heart of the *beau monde*; and here Steele, moreover, would be within easy distance of the Court, and the Cockpit at Whitehall. He appears to have begun his establishment upon the lavish footing of a gentleman whose expectations are larger than his means, and whose wife's dignity demands, if not 'the gilt coach and dappled Flanders mares' of Pope's Pamela, at least a chariot, a lady's-maid, and an adequate equipment of cinnamon satin. On paper his yearly income from all sources, Mrs. Scurlock's allowance not included, was about £1250. But by far the largest portion of this was derived from the Barbados property, which, besides being encumbered by legacies, seems to have made irregular returns. His salary as Gazetteer was also subject to 'deductions,' and as with the modest pay of a captain in Lucas's he had dabbled in alchemy, he was probably considerably in debt. The prospect was not a cheerful one, either for him or for 'Prue,' as he soon begins to call his more circumspect better-half, and the signs of trouble are quickly present. Always irrepressibly sanguine, and generally without ready money, he is constantly turning some pecuniary corner or other, not without anticipations and borrowings that bring their inevitable train of actions and bailiffs. All this has to be gently tempered to the apprehensive 'Prue,' who, to her other luxuries, contrives to add a confidante, described as Mrs. (probably here it means Miss) Binns. Meanwhile her husband, bustling to and fro, now detained in his passage by a friend (and a 'pint of wine'),—now, it is to be feared, attentively shadowed by the watchful 'shoulder-dabbers,'—scribbles off, from remote 'blind taverns' and other casual coigns of vantage, a string of notes and note-lets designed to keep his 'Absolute Governess' at Bury Street minutely acquainted with his doings. Through all of these the 'dusky strand' of the 'West Indian business'—in other words, the protracted negotiation for the sale of the Barbados property—winds languidly and inextricably.

Eighteenth Century Studies

Steele's letters to his wife, accessible in the reprints by Nichols of 1787 and 1809, are, however, too well known to need description, and although Mr. Aitken has collated them with the originals, he does not profess to have made any material addition to their riches. As they progress, they record more than one of the various attempts at advancement with which their writer, egged on by his ambition and his embarrassments, is perpetually pre-occupied. To-day it is a gentleman-ushership that seems within his reach; to-morrow he is hoping to be Under-Secretary, *vice* Addison promoted to Ireland. Then the strange disquieting figure of Swift appears upon the scene, not, as it seems, to exercise its usual power of fascination over 'Prue,' by whom—Swift declares later—Steele is governed 'most abominably, as bad as Marlborough.' With April, 1709, comes the establishment of the 'Tatler,' and we enter upon thrice-gleaned ground. The period covered by 'Mr. Bickerstaff's Lucubrations' and their successor, the 'Spectator,' lighted as it is by stray side-rays from the wonderful 'Journal to Stella,' offers few opportunities for any fresh illumination. Beyond printing, from the Blenheim MSS., some interesting accounts of Jacob Tonson, bearing upon the sale of the collected editions, and, from the British Museum, an assignment to Buckley the bookseller of a share in the 'Spectator,' Mr. Aitken adds nothing that is absolutely new to what has already been collected by Drake, Percy, Chalmers, Nichols, and other writers. With respect to the unexplained cessation of the 'Tatler,' he apparently inclines to the view that it was in some sort the result of an understanding with Harley, by which Steele, having been deprived of his Gazetteership as a caution, was allowed to retain, *quamdiu se bene gesserit*, his recently acquired appointment as Commissioner of Stamps. But it is not probable that we shall ever know much more of a transaction concerning which Addison was unconsulted, and Swift uninformed. With all his customary openness, Steele could, if he pleased, keep his own counsel, and he seems to have done so on this occasion.

The Latest Life of Steele

Nor are we really any wiser as to the reasons for the termination of the 'Spectator' in December, 1712, except that we know it to have been premeditated, since the 'Guardian' was projected before the 'Spectator' ceased to appear. From the Berkeley letters among Lord Egmont's MSS., we learn that Steele was once more dallying with his first love, the stage; and from the same source that, either early in February or late in January, the death of his mother-in-law had put him in possession of £500 per annum. To this improvement in his affairs is doubtless traceable that increased spirit of independence which precipitated what all lovers of letters must regard as his disastrous plunge into politics. Whatever the origin of the 'Guardian,' and however sincere its opening protests of neutrality, the situation was far too strained for one who, having a journal at his command, had been from his youth a partisan of the Revolution, and had already made rash entry into party quarrels. Before May, 1713, he was involved in bitter hostilities with Swift, arising out of a Tory attack on the Nottinghams for their desertion to the Whigs. A few weeks later found him insisting upon the demolition, under the Treaty of Utrecht, of the harbour and fortifications of Dunkirk, which demolition, it was shrewdly suspected, the Ministry were intending to forego. In June he had resigned his Commissionership of Stamps, and in August he was elected member for the borough of Stockbridge. Almost concurrently he issued a pamphlet entitled 'The Importance of Dunkirk consider'd.' Swift, henceforth hanging always upon his traces, retorted with one of his cleverest pamphlets, 'The Importance of the "Guardian" considered,' and the 'under-spurleathers' of the Tory press began also to ply their pens against Steele, who by this time had dropped the 'Guardian' for a professedly political organ, the 'Englishman.' Shortly afterwards he issued 'The Crisis,' a pamphlet on the Hanoverian succession, which Swift followed by his masterly 'Publick Spirit of the Whigs.' No sooner had Steele taken his seat in the House in February than he found that in the eyes

Eighteenth Century Studies

of those in power he was a marked man. He was at once impeached for seditious utterances in 'The Crisis,' and, though he seems to have made an able defence, was expelled. Then, after a few doubtful months, Queen Anne died, his party came into power, and his troubles as a politician were at an end. In his best pamphlet, his 'Apology for Himself and his Writings,' he has given an account of this part of his career.

That career, as far as literature is concerned, may be said to close with the publication of the 'Apology,' in October, 1714. Not many months afterwards, on presenting an address, he was knighted by King George. During the rest of his life, which was prolonged to September, 1729, when he died at Carmarthen, he continued to publish various periodicals and tracts, none of which is of great importance. In December, 1718, Lady Steele died, and four years later her husband produced a fourth comedy, that 'Conscious Lovers' which honest Parson Adams declared to be (in parts) 'almost solemn enough for a sermon,' but which is nevertheless, perhaps by reason of Cibber's collaboration, one of the best constructed of his plays. Part of Mr. Aitken's second volume is occupied by Steele's connection, as patentee and manager, with Drury Lane Theatre, concerning which he has brought together much curious and hitherto unpublished information. Other points upon which new light is thrown are the publication of 'The Ladies Library,' the establishment of the 'Censorium,' Steele's application for the Mastership of the Charterhouse, Mr. John Rollos and his mechanical hoop-petticoat, the failure of Steele's once famous contrivance, the Fish-Pool, his connection with the Dyers, and so forth.

As regards Steele's character, Mr. Aitken's inquiries further enforce the conclusion that, in any estimate of it, considerable allowance must be made for the influence of that miserable and malicious contemporary gossip, of which, as Fielding says, the 'only basis is lying.' For much of this, Steele's ill-starred excursion into faction is obviously responsible. 'Scandal between Whig and

The Latest Life of Steele

Tory,' said the ingenuous and experienced author of the 'New Atalantis,' 'goes for nothing,' and apart from her specific recantation in the dedication to 'Lucius,' this sentiment alone should suffice to discredit her, at all events in the absence of anything like corroborative evidence. The attacks of Dennis and the rest are as worthless. We know that Steele was not 'descended from a trooper's horse,' and we know that he was not 'born at Carrickfergus' (whatever social disqualification that particular natal accident may entail). Why should we listen to the circulators of these or other stories—those of Savage, for example? With respect to Swift, the most dangerous because the most powerful detractor, it is clear, from the way in which he speaks of Steele and Steele's abilities *before* the strife of party had estranged them, that, if they had never quarrelled, he would have ranked him only a little lower than Addison.¹ And if Steele has suffered from scandal and misrepresentation, he has also suffered from his own admissions. The perfect frankness and freedom of his letters has been accepted too literally. Charming and unique as they are, they leave upon many, who do not sufficiently bear in mind their extremely familiar character, an ill-defined impression that he was over-uxorious, over-sentimental. But a man is not necessarily this for a few extravagant *billets-doux*, or many irreproachable persons who now, in the time-honoured words of Mr. Micawber, 'walk erect before their fellow-men,' would incur the like condemnation. Again, it is, to all appearance, chiefly due to the careless candour of some half-dozen of these documents that Steele has been branded as a drunkard. The fact is that, in an age when to take too much wine was no disgrace, he was neither better nor worse than his contemporaries; and there is besides definite evidence that he was easily overcome—far more easily than Addison. As to his money

¹ Swift's extraordinary pertinacity of hatred to Steele cannot wholly be explained by his sense of Steele's ingratitude. Steele had wounded him hopelessly in his most vulnerable part—he had laughed at his pretensions to political omnipotency, and he had (as Swift thought) also challenged his Christianity.

Eighteenth Century Studies

difficulties, they cannot be denied. But they were the difficulties of improvidence and not of profligacy, of a man, who, with Fielding's joy of life and Goldsmith's 'knack of hoping,' always rated an uncertain income at its highest and not at its average amount, and who, moreover, paid his debts before he died. For the rest, upon the question of his general personality, it will suffice to cite one unimpeachable witness, whose testimony has only of late years come to light. Berkeley, who wrote for the 'Guardian,' and visited Steele much at Bloomsbury (where he saw nothing of Savage's bailiffs in livery), speaks expressly, in a letter to Sir John Perceval, of his love and consideration for his wife, of the generosity and benevolence of his temper, of his cheerfulness, his wit, and his good sense. He should hold it, he says, a sufficient recompense for writing the 'Treatise on Human Knowledge,' that it gained him 'some share in the friendship of so worthy a man.' The praise of Berkeley—Berkeley, to whom Pope gives 'every virtue under heaven,' and who is certainly one of the noblest figures of the century—outweighs whole cartloads of Grub Street scandal and skip-kennel pamphleteers.

With Steele's standing as a man of letters we are on surer ground, since his own works speak for him without the distortions of tradition. To the character of poet he made no pretence, nor could he, although—witness the Horatian lines to Marlborough—he possessed the eighteenth-century faculty of easy octosyllabics. Of his plays it has been said that they resemble essays rather than dramas, a judgment which sets one wondering what would have been the critic's opinion if Steele had never written the 'Spectator' and the 'Tatler.' It is perhaps more to the point that their perception of strongly marked humorous character is far more obvious than their stage-craft, and that their shortcomings in this latter respect are heightened by Steele's debatable endeavours, not (as Cowper says) 'to let down the pulpit to the level of the stage,' but to lift the stage to a level with the pulpit. As a political writer, his honesty and enthusiasm

The Latest Life of Steele

were not sufficient to secure him permanent success in a line where they are not always thrice-armed that have their quarrel just; and it is no discredit to him that he was unable to contend against the deadly irony of Swift. It is as an essayist that he will be best remembered. In the past, it has been too much the practice to regard him as the colourless colleague of Addison. We now know that he deserves a much higher place; that Addison, in fact, was quite as much indebted to Steele's inventive gifts as Steele could possibly have been indebted to Addison's sublimating spirit. It may be that he was a more negligent writer than Addison; it may be that he was inferior as a literary artist; but the genuineness of his feelings frequently carries him farther. Not a few of his lay sermons on anger, pride, flattery, magnanimity, and so forth, are unrivalled in their kind. He rallied the follies of society with unfailing tact and good-humour; he rebuked its vices with admirable courage and dignity; and he wrote of women and children as, in his day, no writer had hitherto dared to do. As the first painter of domesticity, the modern novel owes him much. But modern journalism owes him more, since—to use some words of his great adversary—he ‘refined it first, and showed its use.’

Mr. Aitken's book has been described in the title to this paper as the ‘latest’ Life of Steele. It will probably be the ‘last.’ No one, at all events, is likely to approach the subject again with the same indefatigable energy of research. To many of us, indeed, Biography, conceived in this uncompromising fashion, would be a thing impossible. To shrink from no investigation, however tedious, to take nothing at second-hand, to verify everything, to cross-examine everything, to leave no smallest stone unturned in the establishment of the most infinitesimal fact—these are conditions which presuppose a literary constitution of iron. It is but just to note that the method has its drawbacks. So narrow an attention to minutiae tends to impair the selective power, and the defect of Mr. Aitken's work is—almost of necessity—its superabundance.

Eighteenth Century Studies

It will be said that his determination to discover has sometimes carried him too far afield; that much of these two handsome volumes might with advantage have been committed to the safekeeping of an appendix; that the mass of detail, in short, is out of proportion to its actual relevance. To this, in all likelihood, the author would answer that his book is not designed (in Landor's phrase) to lie—

‘ With summer sweets, with albums gaily drest,
Where poodle sniffs at flower between the leaves; ’

that he does not put it forward as a study or critical monograph; but that it is a leisurely and conscientious effort, reproducing much out - of - the - way information which is the lawful prize of his individual bow and spear; and that, rather than lose again what has been so painfully acquired, he is prepared to risk the charge of surplusage, content if his labours be recognized as the fullest and most trustworthy existing contribution towards the life and achievements of a distinguished man of letters who died more than one hundred and eighty years ago. And this recognition his labours undoubtedly deserve.

BOSWELL'S PREDECESSORS AND EDITORS

WRITING to Pope in July, 1728, concerning the annotation of the 'Dunciad,' Swift comments upon the prompt oblivion which overtakes the minor details of contemporary history. 'Twenty miles from London nobody understands hints, initial letters, or town facts and passages; and in a few years not even those who live in London.' A somewhat similar opinion was expressed by Johnson. 'In sixty or seventy years, or less,' he said, 'all works which describe manners, require notes.' His own biography is a striking case in point. Almost from the beginning the editorial pen was freely exercised upon it, and long before the lesser term he mentions, it was already—to use an expressive phrase of Beaumarchais—'*rongée d'extraits et couverte de critiques*.' With Mr. Croker's edition of 1831 it might have been thought that the endurable limits of illustration and interpretation had been reached, and for some time, indeed, that opinion seems to have obtained. But within a comparatively brief period three other editions of importance have made their appearance, each of which has its special features, while four and twenty years ago was published another (reissued in 1888), which had, at least, the advantage of an excellent plan. Boswell's book itself may now, in Parliamentary language, be taken for 'read.' As Johnson said of Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' 'its merit is established, and individual praise or censure can neither augment nor diminish it.' But the publication, in Colonel Grant's excellent brief memoir, of the first systematic bibliography of Johnson's works, coupled with the almost simultaneous issue by Mr. H. R. Tedder, the able and

Eighteenth Century Studies

accomplished secretary and librarian to the Athenæum Club, of a bibliography of Boswell's masterpiece, affords a sufficient pretext for some review of Boswell's editors and predecessors.

Johnson died on the evening of Monday, December 13, 1784. According to a letter dated May 5, 1785, from Michael Lort to Bishop Percy, printed in Nichols' 'Literary Illustrations,' the first Life appeared on the day following the death. But this is a manifest mistake, as reference to contemporary newspapers, or even to the pamphlet itself, should have sufficed to show. At p. 120 is an account of Johnson's funeral, which did not take place until Monday, December 20. Moreover, the portrait by T. Trotter,¹ for which Johnson is said to have sat 'some time since,' is dated the 16th, and in an article in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for December, it is expressly stated that the book 'was announced before the Doctor had been two days dead,' and appeared on the ninth morning after his death. It may even be doubtful if this is strictly accurate, as the first notification of the pamphlet in the 'Public Advertiser' appears on Thursday, the 23rd, and promises its publication that week. Its title is 'The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., with Occasional Remarks on his Writings, an Authentic Copy of his Will, and a Catalogue of his Works, &c.,' 1785. It is an octavo of iv-144 pages, and its publisher was the G. Kearsley, of 46 Fleet Street, who issued so many of Goldsmith's works. Its author, too, is supposed to have been the William Cook who subsequently wrote recollections of Goldsmith in the 'European Magazine' for 1793. In Kearsley's advertisement great pains are taken to avert the possible charge of catchpenny haste, by the statement that the book had been drawn up for some time, but had been withheld from motives of delicacy. This anticipatory defence, however, Sylvanus Urban promptly de-

¹ Thomas Trotter was a friend of William Blake. Trotter's 'drawing in chalk' of Dr. Johnson 'from the life, about eighteen months before his death' [Cook says February, 1782], was exhibited at the Academy in 1785 (Gilchrist's 'Blake,' 1880, i. 57).

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

molished, in the above-mentioned notice, by adducing several palpable examples of 'hurry.' The sketch professes, nevertheless, to be 'warm from the life,' and, although speedily superseded by more leisurely efforts, is certainly not without interest as the earliest of its kind, even if it be not quite so early as it has hitherto been affirmed to be.

Cook's so-called Life was followed by articles in the 'European' and the 'Gentleman's' Magazines for December, 1784, which, according to the fashion of those days, appeared at the end and not at the beginning of the month. That in the 'European Magazine,' which was more critical than biographical, was continued through several numbers, and contains nothing to distinguish it from the respectable and laborious journey-work of the period. The memoir in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' is of a far more meritorious character, and was from the pen of Tom Tyers, the 'Tom Restless' of the 'Idler,' and the son of Jonathan, 'the founder of that excellent place of publick amusement, Vauxhall Gardens.' Tom Tyers had really known Johnson with a certain degree of intimacy, and even Boswell is obliged to admit that Tyers lived with his illustrious friend 'in as easy a manner as almost any of his very numerous acquaintance.' He has certainly not caught Johnson's style, as his memories are couched in abrupt shorthand sentences which are the reverse of Johnsonese. But apart from a certain vanity of classical quotation, with which he seems to have been twitted by his contemporaries, 'Tom Restless' writes like a gentleman, and is fully entitled to the praise of having produced the first animated study of Johnson, who, from a sentence towards the close, appears to have anticipated that Tyers might be one day 'called upon to assist a posthumous account of him.' Mr. Napier says that Tyers continued his work in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for January, 1785. This is not exact, and is indeed practically contradicted by Mrs. Napier, since in the valuable volume of 'Johnsoniana' which accompanies her husband's edition, she prints no more than is to be found

Eighteenth Century Studies

in the December number. What Tyers really did was to insert a number of minor corrections and additions in the annual supplement to the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1784, and in the number for February, 1785.

Without a close examination of contemporary advertisement sheets it would be difficult to fix precisely the date of publication of the next biography. It is a small octavo of 197 pages, entitled 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Late Dr. Samuel Johnson; containing many valuable Original Letters, and several Interesting Anecdotes both of his Literary and Social Connections: the Whole authenticated by living Evidence.' The title-page is dated 1785. In the Preface mention is made of assistance rendered by Thomas Davies, the actor-bookseller of 8 Russell Street, Covent Garden, who is described as 'the late.' The book must therefore have appeared after Thursday, May 5, when Davies died. Its author is conjectured to have been the Rev. William Shaw, 'a modest and a decent man,' referred to in Boswell as the compiler of 'an Erse Grammar,' subsequently issued in 1778 as 'An Analysis of the Gaelic Language.' Colour is given to this supposition by the fact that another of the persons who supplied information was Mr. James Elphinston, by whom Shaw was introduced to Johnson, and by the references made to the Ossian controversy, in which Shaw did battle on Johnson's side against Macpherson. For the book itself, it is, like most of the pre-Boswellian efforts, Tyers's sketch excepted, mainly critical, and makes no attempt to reproduce Johnson's talk or opinions, though it published, for the first time, two or three of his letters.

Chit-chat and personal characteristics are, however, somewhat more fully represented in what—neglecting for the moment Boswell's 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides'—may be regarded as the next effort in the biographical sequence, the famous 'Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., during the Last Twenty Years of his Life,' by Hester Lynch Piozzi, which was published in March, 1786. Written in Italy, where she was then living, it was printed in London. Its success, as might

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

perhaps have been anticipated from the author's long connection with Johnson, was exceptional. The first edition, like that of Fielding's 'Amelia,' was exhausted on the day of publication, and other editions followed rapidly. Boswell, as may be guessed, was not well disposed towards the work of his fortunate rival, and in his own book is at considerable pains to expose her 'mistaken notion of Dr. Johnson's character,' while his coadjutor, Malone, who tells us that she made £500 by the 'Anecdotes,' plainly calls her both 'inaccurate and artful.' We, who are neither editors nor biographers of Boswell, need not assume so censorious an attitude. That Mrs. Piozzi, by habit of mind, and from the circumstances under which her narrative was compiled, was negligent in her facts (she even blunders as to the date when she first met Johnson) may be admitted; and it is not inconceivable that, as Mrs. Napier says in the 'Prefatory Notice' to her 'Johnsoniana,' her account would have been 'more tender and true if it had been given by Mrs. Thrale instead of Mrs. Piozzi.' But the cumulative effect of her vivacious and disconnected recollections (even Malone admits them to be 'lively') is rather corroborative of, than at variance with, that produced by Johnson's more serious biographers. Her opportunities were great,—perhaps greater than those of any of her contemporaries,—her intercourse with Johnson was most unrestrained and unconventional, and notwithstanding all its faults, her little volume remains an essential part of Johnsonian literature.

Boswell, whose *magnum opus* we are now approaching, so fills the foreground with his fame that the partial obliteration of his predecessors is almost a necessary consequence. In this way Sir John Hawkins, whose 'Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.,' 1787, comes next in importance to Mrs. Piozzi's 'Anecdotes,' has suffered considerably; and his book, which immediately after Johnson's death was advertised as 'forthcoming,' is, to use the words of a recent writer, 'spoken of with contempt by many who have never taken the trouble to do more than turn over its

Eighteenth Century Studies

leaves.' That the author seems to have been extremely unpopular can scarcely be denied. Malone, who accumulates a page of his characteristics, says that Percy called him 'most detestable,' Reynolds, 'absolutely dishonest,' and Dyer, 'mischievous, uncharitable, and malignant,' to which chaplet of dispraise the recorder adds, as his own contribution, that he was 'rigid and sanctimonious.' Johnson, too, styled him 'an unclubable man.' But against all this censure it must be remembered that he was selected as one of the first members of 'The Club' (to whose promoters his peculiarities can scarcely have been unknown, for he had belonged to the earlier association in Ivy Lane), and that Johnson appointed him one of his executors. Boswell, whose vanity Hawkins had wounded by the slight and supercilious way in which he spoke of him in the 'Life,' could scarcely be supposed to feel kindly to him; and though he professes to have modified what he said of this particular rival on account of his death, we have no means of knowing how much he suppressed. He gives, nevertheless, what on the whole is a not unfair idea of Hawkins's volume. 'However inadequate and improper,' he says, 'as a Life of Dr. Johnson, and however discredited by unpardonable inaccuracies in other respects, [it] contains a collection of curious anecdotes and observations which few men but its authour could have brought together.' What is commendatory in this verdict is not exaggerated, and those who care enough for Johnson to travel beyond Boswell will certainly find Hawkins by no means so 'ponderous' as Boswell would have us to believe. Many of the particulars he gives are certainly not to be found elsewhere, and his knowledge of the seamy side of letters in Georgian London was 'extensive and peculiar.'

To speak of Hawkins after Mrs. Piozzi is a course more convenient than chronological, as it involves the neglect of an intermediate biographer. But the 'Essay on the Life, Character, and Writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson,' from the pen of the Rev. Joseph Towers, which comes between them in 1786, has no serious import. It treats

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

more of the writings than the character and life, and, except as the respectable effort of an educated man, need not detain us from Boswell himself, whose first offering at the shrine of his adoration was made in September, 1785, when he published the 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.' The tour, of which Johnson had himself given an account in his 'Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland,' had taken place as far back as 1773, and Boswell's journal had lain by him ever since. But the manuscript had been lent to different persons,—to Mrs. Thrale among the rest. 'I am glad you read Boswell's journal,' said Johnson to her; 'you are now sufficiently informed of the whole transaction, and need not regret that you did not make the tour to the Hebrides.' A more emphatic testimony is contained in the 'Journal' itself. Johnson, we are told, perused it diligently from day to day, and declared that he took great delight in doing so. 'It might be printed,' he said, 'were the subject fit for printing,' and further on he forbade Boswell to contract it. Boswell in his dedication to Malone, whose acquaintance he made in Baldwin's printing-office while correcting the proofs, showed that he was conscious of the strong point of his work, 'the numerous conversations, which (he said) form the most valuable part.' In the third edition, dated August, 1786, the success of the book justified an ampler note of gratification: 'I will venture to predict, that this specimen of the colloquial talents and extemporaneous effusions of my illustrious fellow-traveller will become still more valuable, when, by the lapse of time, he shall have become an ANCIENT; when all those who can now bear testimony to the transcendent powers of his mind shall have passed away; and no other memorial of this great and good man shall remain but the following Journal, the other anecdotes and letters preserved by his friends, and those incomparable works, which have for many years been in the highest estimation, and will be read and admired as long as the English language shall be spoken or understood.' Whether this variation of *Exegi monumentum* is justifiable or not—and

Eighteenth Century Studies

certainly some of the 'incomparable works' have but faintly fulfilled their promise of diuturnity—Boswell's accentuation of his distinctive excellence, his admirably characteristic records of conversations, is unanswerable evidence of a settled purpose and a definite aim.

On a fly-leaf of the 'Tour to the Hebrides' (not as Mr. Napier supposed, confined to the third edition) was announced as 'preparing for the press' the greater work by which the 'Tour' was succeeded in 1791. At first it was to have been comprised in one quarto volume, but it ultimately made its appearance in two. The publisher was Charles Dilly, in the Poultry, and the title-page ran as follows:—

'The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., comprehending an Account of his Studies and numerous Works, in chronological Order; a Series of his Epistolary Correspondence and Conversations with many eminent Persons; and various original Pieces of his Composition, never before published. The whole exhibiting a View of Literature and Literary Men in Great-Britain, for near half a Century, during which he flourished.'

In the dedication to Sir Joshua Reynolds, referring to the earlier book, Boswell dwells upon a difference of treatment which distinguishes the 'Life' from its predecessor. In the 'Tour' he had, it seems, been too open in his communications, freely exhibiting to the world the dexterity of Johnson's wit, even when that wit was exercised upon himself. His frankness had in some quarters been mistaken for insensibility, and he has therefore in the 'Life' been 'more reserved,' and though he tells nothing but the truth, has still kept in his mind that the whole truth is not always to be exposed. In the Advertisement which succeeds, he enlarges upon the difficulties of his task, and the labour involved in the arrangement and collection of material; and he expresses his obligations to Malone, who had heard nearly all the work in manuscript, and had revised about half of it in type. Seventeen hundred copies of it were printed, and although the price in boards was two guineas, between May (the date of publication) and

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

August twelve hundred of these had been sold. Boswell, who gives this information to his friend Temple, in a letter dated the 22nd of the latter month, expected that the entire impression would be disposed of before Christmas.

This hope, however, does not appear to have been realized, since the second edition in three volumes octavo, considerably revised, and including 'eight sheets of additional matter,' was not published until July, 1793. During the progress of the work through the press many additional letters and anecdotes had come to hand, which were inserted in an introduction and appendix. These numerous improvements were at the same time printed in quarto form for the benefit of the purchasers of the issue of 1791, and sold at half-a-crown, under the title of 'The Principal Corrections and Additions to the First Edition of Mr. Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson.' As in the 'Tour to the Hebrides,' the success of his labours inspired their author with a greater exultation of prefatory language. Referring to the death of Reynolds, which had taken place in the interval between the first and second editions, he says that Sir Joshua had read the book, and given 'the strongest testimony to its fidelity.' He has *Johnsonised* the land, he says farther on, and he trusts 'they will not only talk but think Johnson.'

He was still busily amending and retouching for a third edition when he died, on May 19, 1795, at his house, then No. 47, but now (or recently) No. 122, Great Portland Street. His task was taken up by Malone, who had been his adviser from the first, and under Malone's superintendence was issued, 'revised and augmented,' the third edition of 1799. From the fact that it contains Boswell's latest touches, this edition is held to be the most desirable by Johnson students. Boswell's friends contributed several notes, some of which were the work of the author's second son, James, then a student at Brasenose College, Oxford. Fourth, fifth, and sixth editions followed, all under the editorship of Malone. Then, shortly after the publication in 1811 of the last of these, Malone himself

Eighteenth Century Studies

died. Seventh, eighth, and ninth editions, all avowedly or unavowedly reproducing Malone's last issue, subsequently appeared, the ninth having some additions by Alexander Chalmers. Then came what is known as the 'Oxford' edition, by F. P. Walesby, of Wadham College, which contained some fresh recollections of Johnson and some stray particulars as to Boswell, whose portrait, for the first time, is added. A tiny issue in one volume, small octavo, beautifully printed in double columns at the Chiswick Press, is the only one that needs mention previous to the historical edition by the Right Honourable John Wilson Croker, published in 1831.

As will be seen, the foregoing paragraphs deal more with Johnson's earlier biographers than with the main subject of this paper, Boswell's editors. But the earlier biographers are, if not the chief, at least no inconsiderable part of the material employed by those editors, and by none more conspicuously, more ably, and at the same time more unhappily, than by the one whose labours attracted the censure of Macaulay and Carlyle. What is most distinctive in Boswell is Boswell's method and Boswell's manner. Long before, Johnson had touched upon this personal quality when writing of the Corsican tour. "Your History," he said, "is like other histories, but your Journal is in a very high degree curious and delightful. . . . Your History was copied from books; your Journal rose out of your own experience and observation. You express images which operated strongly upon yourself, and you have impressed them with great force upon your readers." From less friendly critics the verdict was the same. Walpole, though caustic and flippant, speaks to like purport; and Gray, who has been 'pleased and moved strangely,' declares it proves what he has always maintained, 'that any fool may write a most valuable book by chance, if he will only tell us what he heard and saw with veracity.' This faculty of communicating his impressions accurately to his reader is Boswell's most conspicuous gift. Present in his first book, it was more present in his second, and when he began his great

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

biography it had reached its highest point. So individual is his manner, so unique his method of collecting and arranging his information, that to disturb the native character of his narrative by interpolating foreign material, must of necessity impair its specific character and imperil its personal note. Yet, by some strange freak of fate, this was just the very treatment to which it was subjected.

From the very outset indeed, it would seem, his text was considerably 'edited.' Boswell, like many writers of his temperament, was fond of stimulating his flagging invention by miscellaneous advice, and it is plain from the comparison of his finished work with his rough notes, that in order to make his anecdotes more direct and effective he freely manipulated his reminiscences. But it is quite probable—and this is a point that we do not remember to have seen touched on—that much of the trimming which his records received is attributable to Malone. At all events, when Malone took up the editing after Boswell's death, he is known to have made many minor alterations in the process of 'settling the text,' and it is only reasonable to suppose that he had done the same thing in the author's lifetime, a supposition which would account for some at least of the variations which have been observed between Boswell's anecdotes in their earliest and their latest forms. But the admitted alterations of Malone were but trifles compared with the extraordinary readjustment which the book, as Malone left it, received at the hands of Mr. Croker. Not content with working freely upon the text itself—compressing, omitting, transposing as seemed good in his eyes—by a process almost inconceivable in a critic and *littérateur* of admitted experience, he liberally interlarded it with long extracts and letters from Hawkins, Piozzi, Cumberland, Murphy, and others of Boswell's predecessors and successors, and so turned into an irregular patchwork what the author had left a continuous and methodical design. Furthermore he incorporated with it, among other things, under its date of occurrence, the separate volume of the 'Tour to the

Eighteenth Century Studies

Hebrides,'¹ having first polled and trimmed that work according to his taste and fancy. Finally, he added—and this is the least questionable of his acts—an inordinate number of foot-notes. Many of these, it must be conceded, are of the highest value. Penned at a time when memories of Johnson and his contemporaries were still fresh in men's minds, and collected by a writer whose industry and curiosity were as exceptional as his equipment and opportunities, they must always remain an inestimable magazine of Johnsoniana. Their worst fault is that they are more a warehouse than a treasury, and that they exhibit less of literary resource than literary incontinence.

But if the intrinsic and inherent worth of Croker's voluminous annotations has survived the verbal artillery of Macaulay and Carlyle, it has luckily been otherwise with his remodelling of Boswell's text, the principles of which were virtually abandoned in the second edition of 1835. Unfortunately, the execution of this concession to popular opinion was only partial. Although the majority of the passages added to the text were rearranged as foot-notes or distributed into appendices, the Scotch 'Tour' still upreared itself in the midst as a huge stumbling-block, while the journey to Wales and the letters of Johnson and Mrs. Thrale were retained. In 1847, when Mr. Croker prepared his definite edition, he continued impenitent to this extent, although he speaks in his 'Advertisement' of abridgment and alteration. Nay, he even acquiesced in the perpetuation of another enormity which dates from the edition of 1835 (an edition which he only partly superintended), the breaking up of the book into chapters. This was a violation of Boswell's plan which it is impossible to describe except as an act of

¹ He may have been advised to do this. Lockhart, writing to Murray, Jan. 19, 1829, says, 'Pray ask Croker whether Boswell's account of the Hebridean Tour ought not to be melted into the book.' But it is clear from Croker's first letter to Murray of Jan. 9, and his specific words a day later, when accepting Murray's terms ('I shall also endeavour to throw as much as I can into the *text*'), that he had his own perverted ideal from the outset (Smiles's 'Memoir of John Murray,' 1891, ii. 288).

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

Vandalism. 'Divisions into books and chapters,' says Mr. Napier, unanswerably (if somewhat grandiloquently), 'if they have any meaning, are, as it were, articulations in the organic whole of a literary composition; and this special form cannot be superinduced merely externally.' Yet, all these drawbacks to the contrary, Mr. Croker's edition enjoyed a long popularity, and the edition just referred to was reprinted as late as 1876.

It would be beyond our province to trace the post-Crokerian issues of Boswell's book, which, with the exception of an illustrated edition under the superintendence of Dr. Robert Carruthers, author of the life of Pope, were mainly reprints of Malone. But from what has gone before, it will be surmised that the presentation, as far as practicable, of Boswell's unsophisticated text must sooner or later become the ambition of the modern editor. In this praiseworthy enterprise the pioneer appears to have been Mr. Percy Fitzgerald. In May, 1874, acting with the encouragement and countenance of Carlyle, to whom his work was dedicated, he published with Messrs. Bickers an edition of Boswell's 'Life' in three volumes, of which the object was to exhibit Boswell's text in its first published form, and at the same time to show the alterations made or contemplated by him in the two subsequent editions with which he was concerned. Thus the reader was enabled to follow the process of revision in the author's mind, and to derive additional satisfaction from the spectacle of the *naïf* and highly ingenuous motives which prompted many of Boswell's rectifications and readjustments. As was inevitable in such a plan, the 'Tour to the Hebrides' was placed by itself at the end, an arrangement which had also been followed by Carruthers; the 'Diary of a Tour in Wales,' which Mr. Croker had turned into chap. xlvi. of his compilation, disappeared altogether; and the interpolated letters knew their place no more. The division into chapters also vanished with the restoration of the original text, which, together with Boswell's spelling, punctuation, paragraphs, and other special characteristics, were religiously preserved. By this arrangement, taken

Eighteenth Century Studies

in connection with the foot-notes exhibiting the variation, the reader was placed in the position of a person having before him at one view the editions of 1791, 1793, and 1799, as well as the separate 'Corrections and Additions' issued by Boswell in 1793. Mr. Fitzgerald also appended certain notes of his own; but, wherever they occurred on the same page as Boswell's work, carefully fenced them off by a line of demarcation from what was legitimate Boswell. Upon these notes, generally brief and apposite, it is not necessary to dwell. The noticeable characteristic of Mr. Fitzgerald's edition is its loyalty to Boswell, and for that, if for that only, the lovers of Johnson owe him a deep debt of gratitude.¹

In 1880, six years after the first appearance of the above edition of Boswell's 'Life,' Mr. Fitzgerald published, under the title of 'Croker's Boswell and Boswell,' a volume which was apparently the outcome of his earlier labours in this field. With the first part of this, which treats mainly of the feud between Macaulay and Croker, and the peculiarities and defects of the latter as an editor, we have no immediate concern. But the second part, which exhibits Boswell at his work, collects much valuable information with respect to his method of note-making, and, with the assistance of the curious memoranda belonging to the late Lord Houghton, published in 1874 by the Grampian Club under the title of 'Boswelliana,' shows how much judicious correction and adroit compression went to produce these 'literary and characteristical anecdotes told with authenticity, and in a lively manner,' which, as Boswell explained to his friend Temple, were to form the staple of his work. Other chapters of equal interest deal with Boswell's strange antipathies and second thoughts, both of which themes, and the former especially, are of no small importance to the minute student of his labours. We have mentioned this book of

¹ Mr. Fitzgerald's edition of Boswell was re-issued in 1888, with a new and interesting preface, to which was added the valuable Bibliography by Mr. Henry R. Tedder, referred to at the beginning of this paper.

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

Mr. Fitzgerald's, because, among the many productions of his indefatigable pen, it is the one which has always interested us most, and it is obviously, as he declares in his preface, written *con amore*.

That the reproduction of Boswell neat—to use a convenient vulgarism—had attracted closer attention to the defects of Croker's concoction may be fairly assumed, and the volume just mentioned probably, and certainly among specialists, enforced this impression. Accordingly, in 1884, a new edition of the 'Life,' upon which the editor, the late Rev. Alexander Napier, vicar of Holkham, had been engaged for several years, was issued by Messrs. George Bell and Sons. It was illustrated by facsimiles, steel engravings and portraits, and was received with considerable, and even, in some quarters, exaggerated, enthusiasm. In this edition the arrangement of Boswell's text was strictly followed, and the tours in Wales and Scotland were printed separately. Many of Croker's notes were withdrawn or abridged, and Mr. Napier, in pursuance of a theory, which is as sound as it is unusual, also omitted all those in which his predecessor had considered it his duty 'to act as censor on Boswell' and even on Johnson himself. The editor's duty, said Mr. Napier, 'is to subordinate himself to his author, and admit that only which elucidates his author's meaning. . . . It cannot be the duty of an editor to insult the writer whose book he edits. I confess that the notes of Mr. Croker which most offend are those in which, not seldom, he delights—let me be allowed to use a familiar colloquialism—to snub "Mr. Boswell." ' In this deliverance no reasonable reader can fail to concur. Besides the editing of Croker, however, Mr. Napier added many useful notes of his own, as well as some very interesting appendices. One of these reproduces the autobiographical sketch of Johnson prefixed by Richard Wright of Lichfield, in 1805, to Miss Hill Boothby's letters; another deals with that mysterious 'History of Prince Titi' which figures in Macaulay's review of Croker's first edition; a third successfully dissipates the legendary account of a meeting between Ursa Major and Adam

Eighteenth Century Studies

Smith, which represents those 'grave and reverend seignors' as engaged in competitive Billingsgate. 'Carleton's Memoirs,' Theophilus Cibber's 'Lives of the Poets,' and the daughters of Mauritius Lowe are also treated of in this, the newest part of Mr. Napier's labours.

But his edition also includes a valuable supplement in the shape of a volume of 'Johnsoniana,' collected and edited by Mrs. Napier, whose praiseworthy plan is to avoid merely fragmentary 'sayings' and 'anecdotes,' and, as far as possible, to give only complete articles. Thus Mrs. Napier opens with Mrs. Piozzi's book, and then goes on to reprint Hawkins' collection of apophthegms, the Hill-Boothby correspondence, Tom Tyers' sketch from the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' the essay published by Arthur Murphy in 1792 for his edition of Johnson's works, and various recollections and so forth collected from Reynolds, Cumberland, Madame D'Arblay, Hannah More, Percy, and others. But her freshest *trouvaille* is the diary of a certain Dr. Thomas Campbell, an Irishman who visited England in 1775, and, after the fashion of the time, recorded his impressions. This diary has a curious history. Carried to Australia by some of its writer's descendants, it was peaceably travelling towards dissolution when it was unearthed behind an old press in one of the offices of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. In 1854 it was published at Sydney by Mr. Samuel Raymond, and from that date until 1884 does not seem to have been reprinted in England. Dr. Campbell had some repute as an historian, and it was he who prepared for Percy the memoir of Goldsmith which, in 1837, was in the possession of Mr. Prior, and formed the first sketch for the straggling compilation afterwards prefixed to the well-known edition of Goldsmith's works dated 1801. Campbell's avowed object in coming to London was to 'see the lions,' and his notes are sufficiently amusing. He lodged at the Grecian Coffee House, and at the Hummums in Covent Garden, where once appeared the ghost of Johnson's dissolute relative, Parson Ford; he saw Woodward in Benjamin Hoadly's 'Suspicious Husband,' and Garrick as Lusignan and Lear,

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

in which latter character Dr. Campbell, contradicting all received tradition, considered 'he could not display himself.' He went to the auction-rooms in the Piazza; he went to the Foundling and the Temple and Dr. Dodd's Chapel; he went to Ranelagh and the Pantheon, where he watched those lapsed lovers, Lady Grosvenor and the Duke of Cumberland, carefully avoiding each other. He dined often at Thrale's, meeting Boswell and Baretti, and Murphy and Johnson. With the great man he was not impressed, and his portrait affords an example of Johnson as he struck an unsympathetic contemporary. According to Dr. Campbell this was his picture:—'He has the aspect of an Idiot, without the faintest ray of sense gleaming from any one feature—with the most awkward garb, and unpowdered grey wig, on one side only of his head—he is for ever dancing the devil's jig, and sometimes he makes the most driveling effort to whistle some thought in his absent paroxisms. He came up to me and took me by the hand, then sat down upon the sofa, and mumbled out that "he had heard two papers had appeared against him in the course of this week—one of which was—that he was to go to Ireland next summer in order to abuse the hospitality of that place also [a reference to the recently published 'Journey to the Western Islands']"' His awkwardness at table is just what Chesterfield described, and his roughness of manners kept pace with that. When Mrs. Thrale quoted something from Foster's "Sermons" he flew in a passion, and said that Foster was a man of mean ability, and of no original thinking. All which tho' I took to be most true, yet I held it not meet to have it so set down.' From this it will be perceived that Dr. Campbell was of those who identified the 'respectable Hottentot' of Chesterfield's letters with the 'great Lexicographer,' an identification which Dr. Birkbeck Hill, in 'Dr. Johnson His Friends and His Critics,' and subsequent writings, has successfully shown to be untenable.

Towards the close of 1884 Mr. Napier's edition was re-issued in the 'Standard Library,' making six small volumes, in which some only of the portrait illustrations

Eighteenth Century Studies

of the first issue were reproduced. The chief addition consisted of a series of seven letters from Boswell to his friend Sir David Dalrymple. Extracts from this very interesting correspondence, bearing upon Boswell's first acquaintance with his Mentor, had appeared in the volume of 'Boswelliana' already mentioned, but they had been extracts and no more. Mr. Napier gave the letters *in extenso*. Two years later the late Professor Henry Morley published, in five exceedingly handsome volumes, what, from the fact of its decoration by portraits from the brush of Sir Joshua, he christened the 'Reynolds' edition. In common with all Professor Morley's work, the editing of this issue was thoroughly straightforward and sensible. A new and noticeable feature was the prefixing to each of the prefaces of the different editors a succinct account of the writer. At the end came an essay entitled the 'Spirit of Johnson,' to which can scarcely be denied the merit claimed for it by a competent critic of being 'one of the best descriptions of Johnson's character that has ever been written.' There were also elaborate indices, of which one can only say in their dispraise that they were less elaborate than that prepared by the editor who follows Professor Morley. Like Mr. Napier, Mr. Morley was largely indebted to Croker; like Mr. Napier also he freely pruned his predecessor's luxuriance. And this brings us to the last of the three editions mentioned at the beginning of this paper, that issued in 1887 from the Clarendon Press by Dr. George Birkbeck Hill.

That Dr. Birkbeck Hill's book is '*un livre de bonne foi*,' there can indeed be little doubt. He was well known as a devoted worshipper at Johnson's shrine. He had been for years a persistent reviewer of books on this subject, and his essays (collected in 1878 from the 'Cornhill' and other periodicals under the title of 'Dr. Johnson His Friends and His Critics') bear that unmistakable stamp which denotes the writer who has not crammed his subject for the purpose of preparing an article, but who has, so to speak, let the article write itself out of the fulness of his resources. Besides these he edited, in 1879, Boswell's

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

'Journal of a Tour to Corsica' and his correspondence with Andrew Erskine. But he crowned all his former labours by this sumptuous edition with its excellent typography, its handsome page, and its exhaustive index, which last, we can well believe, must have cost him, as he says, 'many months' heavy work.' That he himself executed this 'sublunary task,' as a recent writer has described it, is matter for congratulation; that he has also verified it page by page in proof almost entitles him to a Montyon prize for exceptional literary virtue. Our only regret is that his 'Preface' is touched a little too strongly with the sense of his unquestioned industry and conscientiousness. However legitimate it may be, the public is always somewhat impatient of the *superbia quæsitæ meritis*. Moreover, it is an extremely difficult thing to display judiciously; and, after all, as Carlyle said of Croker's attempt, the editing of Boswell is a 'praiseworthy but no miraculous procedure.'

This note of self-gratulation in Dr. Birkbeck Hill's introductory words is, nevertheless, but a trifling drawback when contrasted with the real merits of a performance which, in these days of piping-hot publication, has much of the leisurely grace of eighteenth-century scholarship. The labour—not only the labour of which the result remains on record, but that bloomless and fruitless labour with which every one who has been engaged in editorial drudgery can sympathize—must have been unprecedented. Nothing could be more ungracious than to smear the petty blot of an occasional inaccuracy across the wide field which has been explored so observantly—certainly it could not be the desire of those who have ever experienced the multiplied chances of error involved by transcription, press-correction, revision, and re-revision. At the same time we frankly own that we think Dr. Birkbeck Hill's edition has not escaped a dangerous defect of its qualities. It unquestionably errs on the side of excess. 'I have sought,' he says, 'to follow him [Johnson] wherever a remark of his required illustration, and have read through many a book that I might trace to its source a reference

Eighteenth Century Studies

or an allusion.' And he has no doubt been frequently very fortunate, notably in his identification of the quotation which Johnson made when he heard the Highland girl of Nairne singing at her spinning-wheel, in his solution of 'loplolly,' and in half a dozen similar cases. But, as regards 'remarks that require illustration,' there are manifestly two methods, the moderate and the immoderate. By the one nothing but such reference or elucidation as explains the text is admissible; by the other anything that can possibly be connected with it is drawn into its train, and the motley notes tread upon each other's heels much as, in the fairy tale, the three girls, the parson, and the sexton follow the fellow with the golden goose. To the latter of these methods rather than the former Dr. Birkbeck Hill 'seriously inclines,' and almost any portion of his book would serve to supply a case in point. Take, for instance, the note at page 269, vol. i., to the verse which Boswell quotes from Garrick's well-known 'Ode on Mr. Pelham.' Neither Malone nor Croker has anything upon this, and as Boswell himself tells us that Pelham died on the day on which Mallet's edition of Lord Bolingbroke's works came out, and as the first line of his paragraph gives the exact date of the event, it is difficult to see what ground, and certainly what pressing need, there could be for farther comment. Yet Dr. Birkbeck Hill has no less than four 'illustrations.' First he tells us, from Walpole's letters, that Pelham died of a surfeit. This suggests another quotation from Johnson himself about the death of Pope, which introduces the story of the potted lampreys. Then comes a passage from Fielding's 'Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon,' to the effect that he (Fielding) was at his worst when Pelham died. Lastly comes a second quotation from Walpole, this time from his 'George II.,' in which we are told that the king said he should now 'have no more peace,' because Pelham was dead. The recondite erudition of all this is incontestable, but its utility is more than doubtful. Dr. Birkbeck Hill's method is seen more serviceably at work in a note on Reynolds' visit to Devonshire in 1762. First we get a record how

Boswell's Predecessors and Editors

Northcote, 'with great satisfaction to his mind,' touched the skirt of Sir Joshua's coat, and this quite naturally recalls the well-known anecdote how Reynolds himself in his youth had grasped the hand of the great Mr. Pope at Christie's. The transition to Pope's own visit as a boy of twelve to Dryden at Will's Coffee House thus becomes an easy one. 'Who touched old Northcote's hand?' says Dr. Birkbeck Hill. 'Has the apostolic succession been continued?' and then he goes on to add: 'Since writing these lines I have read with pleasure the following passage in Mr. Ruskin's "*Præterita*," chap. i. p. 16: "When at three-and-a-half I was taken to have my portrait painted by Mr. Northcote, I had not been ten minutes alone with him before I asked him why there were holes in his carpet." Dryden, Pope, Reynolds, Northcote, Ruskin, so runs the chain of genius, with only one weak link in it.'

This is an excellent specimen of the concatenated process at the best. We are bound to add that there are many as good. We are moreover bound to admit that the examples of its abuse are by no means obtrusive. Dr. Birkbeck Hill, in short, performed his work thoroughly. His appendices—*e.g.* those on Johnson's Debates in Parliament, and on George Psalmanazar—are practically exhaustive, and he has left no stone unturned in his labour of interpretation. If in the result of that labour there is something of what Croker himself called 'surplusage,' it must also be conceded that Boswell's famous biography has never before been annotated with equal enthusiasm, learning, and industry.¹

¹ After this paper was first published, Dr. Birkbeck Hill further supplemented his valuable Johnson labours by two volumes of letters (1892), and two more of 'Johnsonian Miscellanies' (1897). There have also been several other issues of Boswell's 'Life,' *e.g.*—a compact 'Globe' edition prefaced by Mr. Mowbray Morris; two charming six volume issues, one of which has the advantage of an Introduction by Mr. Augustine Birrell, and an edition in one volume by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, which is a marvel of cheapness,—but that of Dr. Birkbeck Hill is still unrivalled in its kind.

THE COVENT-GARDEN JOURNAL

Being a hitherto-unwritten Chapter in the Life of Henry Fielding.

IN the month of December, 1751, when Henry Fielding issued his last novel of 'Amelia,'—that 'Amelia' which Johnson, despite his dislike to the author, read through without stopping,—he was close upon forty-five. His health was breaking under a complication of disorders, and he had not long to live. For three years he had been in the Commission of the Peace for Middlesex and Westminster, earning—'by composing, instead of inflaming, the quarrels of porters and beggars,' and 'by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have another left'—rather more than £300 per annum of 'the dirtiest money upon earth,' and even of this a considerable portion went to Mr. Brogden, his clerk. He also received, he tells us in the 'Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon,' 'a yearly pension out of the public service-money,' the amount of which is not stated; and he was in addition, as appears from his will, possessed of twenty shares in that multifarious enterprise, puffed obliquely in Book V. of 'Amelia,' the Universal Register Office, which was Estate Office, Lost Property Office, Servants' Registry, Curiosity Shop, and several other things besides. He lived at Bow Street, in a house belonging to his patron, John, Duke of Bedford, which house, during its subsequent tenure by his brother and successor, John Fielding, was destroyed by the Gordon rioters; and he had a little country-box on the highroad between Acton and Ealing,

The Covent-Garden Journal

to which he occasionally retired; and where, in all probability, his children lived with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Daniel.¹ It was at this date, and in these circumstances, that he projected the fourth of his newspapers, 'The Covent-Garden Journal,' concerning which the following notice is inserted at the end of the second volume of 'Amelia,' coming immediately after an advertisement of the Universal Register Office:—'All Persons who intend to take in THE COVENT-GARDEN JOURNAL, which will be certainly published on *Saturday* the 4th of *January* next, Price 3d., are desired to send their Names, and Places of Abode, to the above Office, opposite *Cecil-Street*, in the *Strand*. And the said Paper will then be delivered at their Houses.'

In conformity with this announcement, the first number of 'The Covent-Garden Journal' duly appeared on Saturday, the 4th January, 1752. It was said to be 'by Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Knt. Censor of Great Britain,' and was to 'be continued every Tuesday and Saturday.' It was 'Printed, and Sold by Mrs. Dodd, at the *Peacock*, *Temple Bar*'; and at the Universal Register Office, 'where Advertisements and Letters to the Author are taken in.' For the form, it was Cowper's 'folio of four pages,' beginning with an Essay on the 'Spectator' pattern, followed by Covent Garden news, 'Occasional Pieces of Humour,' 'Modern History' from the newspapers '*cum notis variorum*,' Foreign Affairs, and miscellaneous advertisements, in which last the Universal Register Office and its doings naturally play a conspicuous part. In his initial paper, Fielding expressly disclaims Politics, as the term is understood by his contemporaries, *i.e.*, Faction; personal Slander and Scurrility; and Dulness, unless—like his predecessor Steele—he is unable to avoid it. His motive for issuing the paper is not explicitly disclosed; but it may be fairly suggested that

¹ He had also, during 1753, a residence at Hammersmith, whence, in May of that year (according to the Hammersmith Register), his daughter Louisa was buried. (Information supplied by Mr. Samuel Martin, of the Ravenscourt Park Free Library.)

Eighteenth Century Studies

the promotion of the Register Office scheme, in which he and his brother were concerned, and the placing on record from time to time of the more important cases that came before him at Bow Street in his magisterial capacity—were not foreign to his project. That the latter was intended to be a prominent feature of the new enterprise, is plain from his second number, where, in promising to make the paper ‘a much better Journal of Occurrences than hath been ever yet printed’ he says:—‘I have already secured the Play-houses, and other Places of Resort in this Parish of Covent Garden, as I have Mr. Justice Fielding’s Clerk, who hath promised me the most material Examinations before his Master.’

When Cowper described the eighteenth-century newspaper as a ‘folio of four pages,’ he added:

‘happy work!
Which not e’en critics criticise.’

To ‘The Covent-Garden Journal’ this is singularly inapplicable, since it not only provoked, but was calculated to provoke, contemporary comment. The pioneer of its ‘Occasional Pieces of Humour’ was ‘A Journal of the Present Paper War between the Forces under Sir Alexander Drawcansir, and the Army of Grub-Street.’ In his ‘Introduction’ to this, Sir Alexander contended that the Press was in the possession of an army of scribblers; and that the Government of the State of Criticism was usurped by incompetent persons, whose ranks had moreover been swelled by irregulars less competent still in the shape of ‘Beaux, Rakes, Templars, Cits, Lawyers, Mechanics, School-boys, and fine Ladies,’—from which it must be concluded that the Republic of Letters, even now, has made no exceptional progress. To all this ‘Swarm of Vandals,’ the new Censor declared war. His idea was not a strikingly novel one, either in its inception or its execution; and it is only necessary to quote two passages from this source, because of the events that followed them. In his second number for January 7th, describing the operations of his troops, Fielding proceeds—

The Covent-Garden Journal

‘ A little before our March, however, we sent a large Body of Forces, under the Command of General A. Millar [his publisher], to take Possession of the most eminent Printing-Houses. The greater Part of these were garrisoned by Detachments from the Regiment of Grub-Street, who all retired at the Approach of our Forces. A small Body, indeed, under the Command of one Peeragrin Puckle, made a slight Show of Resistance; but his Hopes were soon found to be in *Vain* [Vane]; and, at the first Report of the Approach of a younger Brother of General Thomas Jones, his whole Body immediately disappeared, and totally overthrew some of their own Friends, who were marching to their Assistance, under the Command of one Rodorick Random. This Rodorick, in a former Skirmish with the People called Critics, had owed some slight Success more to the Weakness of the Critics, than to any Merit of his own.’

The not very formidable satire of this passage was levelled at Smollett, whose ‘ *Peregrine Pickle* ’ had been published at the beginning of 1751, with a success to which its incorporation into its pages of the scandalous *Memoirs of Frances Anne, Viscountess Vane*,—memoirs which Horace Walpole declared worthy to be bound up with those of his own sister-in-law (Lady Orford) and *Moll Flanders*,—had, as Fielding’s *jeu de mots* implies, largely contributed. Sir Alexander further relates that his troops, after being rapturously received by the Critical garrisons at Tom’s in Cornhill and Dick’s at Temple Bar, *blockheaded* up the Bedford Coffee House in Covent Garden, the denizens of which were divided in their welcome, part of them being overawed by a nondescript Monster with Ass’s ears, evidently intended for the Lion’s Head Letter Box on the Venetian pattern, now preserved at Woburn Abbey, which, having honourably served at Button’s for Steele’s ‘ *Guardian*, ’ was then doing fatigue duty at the Bedford for the ‘ *Inspector* ’ of the very versatile Dr., or Sir John Hill. As far as it is possible to comprehend this somewhat obscure quarrel, Fielding, at an earlier and accidental meeting, had jocosely but injudiciously pro-

Eighteenth Century Studies

posed to Hill, whom he knew too little, that they should make believe to attack one another for the public diversion,—a thing which, if it had not been much done before, has certainly been done since. But Hill, a pompous, unscrupulous man, ‘gave him away’ forthwith. The ‘Inspector’ essays were published in ‘The London Daily Advertiser,’ and in No. 268, two days later, he retorted in a strain of outraged dignity. He told the private story from his own highly virtuous point of view, declared that the proposed mock-fight would have been a disingenuous trifling with a trusting public, patronised Fielding as a paragraphist, and pronounced him as an essayist to be ‘unmeaning, inelegant, confused and contradictory.’ He was even base enough to take advantage of Sir Alexander’s failing health. ‘I am sorry’ (he said) ‘to insult the departed Spirit of a living Author; but I tremble when I view this Instance of the transitory Nature of what we are apt to esteem most our own. I drop a Tear to the short Period of human Genius, when I see, after so few Years, the Author of “Joseph Andrews” doating in “The Covent-Garden Journal.” I have an unaffected Pain in being made the Instrument of informing him of this: I could have wished him to enjoy for Life that Opinion he entertains of himself; and never to have heard the Determination of the World.’ Elsewhere he commented ironically on the ‘particular Orthography’ of the word ‘blockade,’ and altogether scored in a fashion which must have been most galling to Fielding, and is to-day almost inconceivable to those who keep in mind the relative importance which posterity has assigned to the performances of ‘the Author of “Amelia”’ (as Hill styled him) and the performances of the Author of the ‘Adventures of Lady Frail.’¹ Fielding was, no doubt, intensely disgusted, and the next instalment of the ‘Journal of the War,’ after giving briefly his own version of the affair, wound up by observing, with more bitterness than usual, that ‘*his Lowness* [Hill] was not only among the

¹ This, which came out in 1751, was a variation by Hill upon the story of Lady Vane.

The Covent-Garden Journal

meanest of those who ever drew a Pen, but was absolutely the vilest Fellow that ever wore a Head.' ¹

Humiliating, however, as was the procedure of Hill, it was nothing to the action of Smollett a few days subsequently. Seeing that, months before, in the first edition of 'Peregrine Pickle,' Smollett had ridiculed Fielding's friend, Lyttelton, as 'Gosling Scrag,'—seeing also that he had unprovokedly sneered at Fielding himself for 'marrying his own cook-wench' (his second wife, it will be remembered, had been the first Mrs. Fielding's maid), and for settling down 'in his old age, as a trading Westminster justice' (in which capacity he certainly never deserved the qualifying adjective), it might be thought that the already quoted allusions to Smollett in 'The Covent-Garden Journal' were neither very virulent nor very vindictive. But such as they were, they stung Smollett to madness. On the 20th of January, he rushed into the fray with a sixpenny pamphlet, modelled after Pope's attack on Dennis, and purporting to be 'A Faithful Narrative of the Base and inhuman Arts That were lately practised upon the Brain of Habbakkuk Hilding, Justice, Dealer, and Chapman, Who now lies at his House in Covent Garden, in a deplorable State of Lunacy, a dreadful Monument of false Friendship and Delusion. By Drawcansir Alexander, Fencing-master and Philomath.' Little beyond the title-page of this unsavoury performance deserves quotation, for it is indescribably coarse and hopelessly rancorous; and indeed is only to be explained by its writer's conviction that Fielding's ridicule must be stopped at all hazards, even if it were needful to have recourse to that nauseous, and now obsolete, mode of warfare described by Commodore Trunnion as 'heaving in

¹ To prove that Fielding's character of Mr. Inspector was deserved, it is only necessary to read the account of Hill's dealing with Christopher Smart ('Gentleman's Magazine,' 1752, pp. 387, 599). A few months after the above attack on Fielding, he was publicly caned at Ranelagh by Mr. Mounteford Brown, an Irish gentleman whom he had libelled. But he must have been clever, since by impudence, cheap science and scandal, he occasionally contrived to clear £1500 a year at the pen, in days when Fielding and Goldsmith and Johnson remained poor.

Eighteenth Century Studies

stink-pots.’¹ It is also manifest from some of its utterances that Smollett, rightly or wrongly, regarded Fielding’s enterprise as inspired by Lyttelton (*cf.* the ‘false Friendship’ of the title); and that he was also conceited or foolish enough to believe that Fielding’s Partridge and Miss Matthews were borrowed from his own Strap and Miss Williams. To the Smollett pamphlet, as well as to some similar and simultaneous attacks upon himself and ‘Amelia’ in a periodical by Bonnel Thornton entitled ‘Have at You All! or, The Drury Lane Journal,’ Fielding made no discernible answer. Already in his fifth issue (January 18th), he had referred generally to ‘the unfair methods made use of by the Enemy’; as well as to the impracticability of replying effectually with a broadsword to blunderbusses loaded with ragged bullets and discharged ‘from lurking Holes and Places of Security.’ With the preceding number, the ‘Journal of the War’ had been terminated by the conclusion of a peace, and a Court of Censorial Enquiry was announced in its place.

From all this, it must be concluded that, as Richardson said, Sir Alexander had been ‘over-matched by people whom he had despised’; and that when, under the motto *Nulla venenato est Litera mista Joco*, he entered light-heartedly upon the campaign against Dulness, he had either not foreseen the treatment he would receive, or had forgotten that the popular reply to raillery is ribaldry. Richardson’s words, indeed, are that he had been ‘over-matched in his own way.’ But this is not the case. His way was possibly the coarse way of his period; but it was not the mean and cowardly way of his assailants. It is, however, characteristic of his sensitive nature that the first work he brought before the new tribunal was his own ‘Amelia.’ He had obviously been greatly annoyed by the malicious capital extracted by the critics out of his unlucky neglect to specify that Mrs. Booth had been cured of the accident recorded in the novel (Bk. II., ch. i.). The

¹ ‘For the benefit of the curious,’ Mr. W. E. Henley reprinted the ‘Faithful Narrative,’ with a prefatory note, at pp. 167-186 of Vol. XII. of his complete edition of Smollett.

The Covent-Garden Journal

accident was one which had happened to his first wife, whose charms had apparently been unimpaired by it; but he had forgotten to state in express terms that the Miss Harris of the story was in similar case; and had thus given obvious opportunity to the adversary to mock at his heroine as 'a beauty without a Nose.' 'Amelia, even to her noselessness, is again his first wife'—wrote Richardson to Mrs. Donnellan; and Johnson also speaks of that 'vile broken nose, never cured.' In the third number of 'The Covent-Garden Journal' (immediately preceding an announcement of the *thirteenth* elopement from her Lord of Lady Vane), Fielding consequently issued a paragraph upon the subject:—'It is currently reported that a famous Surgeon, who absolutely cured one Mrs. Amelia Booth, of a violent Hurt in her Nose, insomuch that she had scarce a Scar left on it, intends to bring Actions against several ill-meaning and slanderous People, who have reported that the said Lady had no Nose, merely because the Author of her History, in a Hurry, forgot to inform his Readers of that Particular. . . .' Besides this, he made several additions to the book itself which left no doubt upon the subject. But he was also mortified and depressed by the reception which 'Amelia' had received from some of those critical irregulars whose activity he had deprecated in his third number, especially the Beaux and fine Ladies, who—if we may believe Mrs. Elizabeth Carter—were unanimous in pronouncing the story 'to be very sad stuff.'¹ Accordingly, in No. 7, 'Amelia' is brought to the Bar, as indicted upon the Statute of Dulness; and Mr. Counsellor Town enumerates her Errors. The book is affirmed to be 'very sad stuff' (thus corroborating Mrs. Carter), and the heroine is described as 'a low Character,' a 'Milksop' and 'a Fool.' She is reproached with a lack of spirit and too frequent fainting; with 'servile offices,' such as dressing her children and cooking; with being too forgiving to her husband; and lastly with the results of the mishap already sufficiently referred to. Dr. Harrison and Colonel Bath fare no

¹ 'Letters,' 3d Ed. 1819, i. 368.

Eighteenth Century Studies

better; and finally Mr. Town undertakes to prove that the Book 'contains no Wit, Humour, Knowledge of human Nature, or of the World; indeed, that the Fable, moral Characters, Manners, Sentiments, and Diction, are all alike bad and contemptible.' After some hearsay evidence has been tendered, and a 'Great Number of Beaus, Rakes, fine Ladies, and several formal Persons with bushy Wigs, and Canes at their Noses,' are preparing to supplement it, a grave Man stands up, and begging to be heard, delivers what must be regarded as Fielding's final apology for his last novel.

'If you, Mr. Censor, are yourself a Parent, you will view me with Compassion when I declare I am the Father of this poor Girl the Prisoner at the Bar; nay, when I go farther, and avow, that of all my Offspring she is my favourite Child. I can truly say that I bestowed a more than ordinary Pains in her Education; in which I will venture to affirm, I followed the Rules of all those who are acknowledged to have writ best on the Subject; and if her Conduct be fairly examined, she will be found to deviate very little from the strictest Observation of all those Rules; neither Homer nor Virgil pursued them with greater Care than myself, and the candid and learned Reader will see that the latter was the noble model, which I made use of on this Occasion.

'I do not think my Child is entirely free from Faults. I know nothing human that is so; but surely she does not deserve the Rancour with which she hath been treated by the Public. However, it is not my Intention, at present, to make any Defence; but shall submit to a Compromise, which hath been always allowed in this Court in all prosecutions for Dulness. I do, therefore, solemnly declare to you, Mr. Censor, that I will trouble the World no more with any Children of mine by the same Muse.'

This was recorded by the Censor to the satisfaction of the majority. 'Amelia was delivered to her Parent, and a Scene of great Tenderness passed between them, which gave much Satisfaction to many present.' But there were some, we are told, who regretted this conclusion to the

The Covent-Garden Journal

cause, and held that the lady ought to have been honourably acquitted. Richardson was not one of these, and wrote jubilantly to Mrs. Donnellan: 'Mr. Fielding has overwritten himself, or rather *under-written*; and in his own journal [which R. persists in calling the *Common Garden Journal*] seems ashamed of his last piece; and has promised that the same Muse shall write no more for him. The piece, in short, is as dead as if it had been published forty years ago, as to sale.' Then comes the remarkable—'You guess that I have not read "*Amelia*." Indeed, I have read but the first volume.'¹ It was not *Amelia*, however, of whom Fielding was ashamed; it was the public. Faults of haste and taste he might have committed; but at least he had presented them with what Thackeray has called 'the most delightful portrait of a woman that surely ever was painted,' and they had preferred the 'Adventures of Lady Frail.'

The 'Court of Censorial Enquiry' continued to sit after this; but, as the paper progressed, only at rare intervals. One of its next duties was to cite the new actor Henry Mossop for daring to act *Macbeth* while Garrick was alive,—a case which was decided, and rightly decided, in favour of Mossop. Another topic dealt with by the Court was the advertisement, in the guise of a criminal, of a whole-length print of the notorious Miss Mary or Molly Blandy (shortly afterwards executed at Oxford), before she had been tried, a course which the Court declared to be 'base and infamous' as tending to 'prepossess the Minds of Men,' and 'take away that Indifference with which Jurymen ought to come to the trial of a Prisoner'—a view which it is difficult to gainsay. One of the first books to be examined is the philological 'Hermes' of James Harris, a second issue of which had

¹ 'Who can care for any of his people?'—he says again to Lady Bradshaigh. 'A person of honour asked me, the other day, what he [Fielding] could mean, by saying, in his "*Covent-Garden Journal*," that he had followed Homer and Virgil, in his "*Amelia*." I answered, that he was justified in saying so, because he must mean Cotton's "*Virgil Travestied*;" where the women are drabs and the men scoundrels.' ('Correspondence,' by Mrs. Barbauld, 1804, vi. pp. 154-155.)

Eighteenth Century Studies

appeared in 1751. But Harris, like the first Mrs. Fielding, was 'of Salisbury,' and was probably known to 'Mr. Censor,' who certainly uses him more gently than Johnson, who found bad grammar in his Dedication and coxcombry in himself as an author.¹ A second work, James Gibbs's translation of Bishop Osorio's 'History of the Portuguese,' probably owed the notice it received to its dedication to Lyttelton. But Fielding seems to have refrained from any record of another book inscribed to himself, and frequently advertised in the 'Journal,' namely, the third edition of Francis Coventry's 'Pompey the Little,' concerning which the quidnuncs asserted that its Lady Tempest had her prototype in Ethelreda or Audrey Harrison, Viscountess Townshend, who was also suspected by some to have sat for the Lady Bellaston of 'Tom Jones.' The new issue of Sarah Fielding's 'David Simple,' another frequent appearance, was less in need of the Censor's notice, since the volumes already included prefaces, avowed and unavowed, from his pen. To his friend Hogarth's 'Analysis of Beauty,' which was announced in March as a forthcoming Tract in Quarto, he might perhaps have been expected to give a hearty welcome; but by the time that much-edited masterpiece was published in December, 'The Covent-Garden Journal' itself was no more. The only literary work belonging strictly to 1752 which it reviewed, was 'The Female Quixote; or, The Adventures of Arabella,' by Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, whom Fielding, in his later 'Voyage to Lisbon,' describes vaguely as 'shamefully distress'd.' To posterity, however, she must always seem rather fortunate than otherwise; since a lady whose abilities, or personal charms, were able to procure for her the countenance and assistance of nearly all the foremost literary men of her time, cannot justly be counted evil-starred. Johnson wrote her Prefaces; Goldsmith, her Epilogues; Garrick helped her to plays (and produced

¹ To quote but one statement from Johnson is seldom safe. Tyers says that the posthumous volumes of Mr. Harris of Salisbury had attractions that engaged the great man to the end.

The Covent-Garden Journal

them at Drury Lane); Richardson read her his private letters; and lastly Fielding, in 'The Covent-Garden Journal' for March the 24th, after implying that, in some particulars, she had outdone Cervantes himself, declared her 'Arabella' to be 'a most extraordinary and most excellent Performance.' 'It is indeed,' he went on, 'a Work of true Humour, and cannot fail of giving a rational, as well as very pleasing, Amusement to a sensible Reader, who will at once be instructed and very highly diverted.' Sir Alexander was never slow at 'backing of his friends.' Only a week or two before, he had added to a notification in the 'Journal' of Mrs. Clive's benefit, the following—'Mrs. Clive in her Walk on the Stage is the greatest Actress the World ever saw; and if as many really understood true Humour as pretend to understand it, she would have nothing to wish, but that the House was six Times as large as it is.' It is pleasant to think that he could still write thus of the accomplished comedian, of whom, eighteen years before, he had said in the epistle prefixed to 'The Intriguing Chambermaid,' that her part in real life was that of 'the best Wife, the best Daughter, the best Sister, and the best Friend.'

But the laurels of Fielding were not won as a periodical writer; and it is idle to seek in 'The Covent-Garden Journal' of his decline for qualities which were absent from 'The Champion' and 'The True Patriot.' Hill's verdict on his work as an essayist is, of course, simply impertinent; but one of his best critics has also admitted of these particular papers that 'few are marked by talent and not one by genius.' It is possible, indeed, that they are not all from his pen, as they frequently bear different initials; and it may well be that some of them should have been signed Lyttelton or Harris. Many, however, may be certainly attributed to Fielding, *e.g.*, the one containing the 'Modern Glossary,' which defines the word 'Great' to signify Bigness, when applied to a Thing, and often Littleness, or Meanness, when applied to a Man,—a distinction which has the very ring of 'Jonathan Wild'; and the two papers devoted to ridiculing the proceedings

Eighteenth Century Studies

of the Robin Hood Society in Essex Street, to which institution he subsequently referred in the 'Voyage to Lisbon.' This free-thinking club was nevertheless a nursery of rhetoric, in which even Burke is supposed to have exercised his powers; and its president, a very dignified baker (who Derrick said ought to have been Master of the Rolls), was undoubtedly a born orator to boot. One of the subsequent papers tells the story of Jucundo from Ariosto's 'Orlando' in the prose fashion afterwards employed by Leigh Hunt in 'The Indicator'; and there are lucubrations upon People of Fashion, Humour, Contempt, Profanity and so forth, besides a very sensible and pleasant Dialogue at Tunbridge Wells, 'after the Manner of Plato,' between a Fine Lady and a Philosopher, which, however, bears the initial 'J.' But Fielding is clearly responsible for the succeeding number, a skit upon the perverse ingenuities of Shakespearean emendation.

To the student, 'The Covent-Garden Journal' must always be interesting for its references, direct and indirect, to its responsible author, now a broken, over-burdened man, nearing the close of his career. Some of these references, hitherto only reported imperfectly from 'The Gentleman's Magazine' and elsewhere, have already been dealt with at the outset of this paper. A few others may find a place here. Foremost comes the constantly recurring notification, which shows how little he regarded his office from the point of view of his own Justice Thrasher:

'All Persons who shall for the Future suffer by Robbers, Burglars, etc., are desired immediately to bring, or send, the best Description they can of such Robbers, etc., with the Time and Place, and Circumstances of the Fact, to Henry Fielding, Esq., at his House in Bow-Street.'

Another instance of his energy in his calling is supplied by the collection of cases which, under the title of 'Examples of the Interposition of Providence, in the Detection and Punishment of Murder,' he threw into pamphlet form in April, 1752, and which was prompted, as the Advertisement puts it, 'by the many horrid

The Covent-Garden Journal

Murders committed within this last Year.' Copies of the 'Examples' were freely distributed in Court to those to whom they seemed likely to be of use. A notice of the arrival at the Register Office of a consignment of Glastonbury Water is proof that Fielding retained his faith in the healing virtues of that 'salubrious Spring'; while the announcement of a new translation of 'Lucian' in collaboration with William Young ('Parson Adams') testifies to the fact that he still hankered after his old literary pursuits. To this last never-executed project the 'Journal' devoted a leading article, which is interesting from its incidental admission that Lucian had been Fielding's own master in style. It further declared that the then-existing English versions of the Samosatene gave no better idea of his spirit 'than the vilest Imitation by a Sign-post Painter can convey the Spirit of the excellent Hogarth,'—another instance of Fielding's fidelity to the friend he had praised in the Preface to 'Joseph Andrews.' The article ends by trusting the Public will support two gentlemen, 'who have hitherto in their several Capacities endeavoured to be serviceable to them, without deriving any great Emolument to themselves from their Labours.' In the next number (for July 4th) there is a hint of Sir Alexander's retirement, which was compromised by changing the 'Journal' from a bi-weekly to a weekly organ. In that form it continued to appear until November 25th, when Fielding definitely took leave of his readers in the tone of a sad and weary man. He begged the Public that henceforth they would not father upon him the dulness and scurrility of his worthy contemporaries, 'since I solemnly declare that unless in revising my former Works, I have at present no Intention to hold any further Correspondence with the gayer Muses.' Such undertakings are not unfrequently given in moments of ill-health or depression; but in this case the promise was kept. The world would be poorer without the posthumous tract which tells the touching story of Fielding's 'Voyage to Lisbon,' and, incidentally, of his remaining years; but, unapproached as is that record for patient

Eighteenth Century Studies

serenity and cheerful courage, the gayer Muses cannot justly be said to have had anything to do with its production.

Only a limited selection of the essays in 'The Covent-Garden Journal' is included in Andrew Millar's edition of Fielding's works. Sets of the original numbers, including the advertisements, etc., are exceedingly rare, and generally incomplete. By way of postscript to this paper we cull a few dispersed items from the chronicle entitled 'Modern History.' Robberies on the highway are of course as 'plenty as blackberries'; but the following extract suggests a picture by Mr. S. E. Waller or Mr. Dendy Sadler:

'A few Days since [this was in January, 1752], as two Gentlemen of the Army, and two Ladies, were coming from Bath to London, in a returned Coach, they were stopped at the Entrance of a Lane by a Labourer from out of a Field, who told them there were two Highwaymen in the Lane, whose Persons and Horses he described: Upon which the Gentlemen got out of the Coach, and walked, one on each Side of it, with Pistols in their Hands. One of the Ladies, seeing the Gentlemens Swords in the Coach, said she would not stay in it, but took one and walked by the Side of one of the Gentlemen; and, encouraged by her Example, the other Lady did so, by the other Gentleman. Thus armed, they went down the Lane where they met the Highwaymen, who passed them without the least Molestation.'

These incidents, however, were not always harmlessly picturesque:

'Wednesday Night [January 15th], Mr. George Cary, a Higgler, who lived near Epping, on his Return home from Leadenhall-market, was robbed and murdered by three Footpads near the Windmill, which is within half a Mile of his own House: They likewise shot his Son, who was in the Cart with him, but his Wound is not likely to prove mortal. Mr. Cary was an honest, industrious Man, and has left a Wife and five Children.'

The Covent-Garden Journal

In his 'Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers,' Fielding had advocated private executions in preference to the degrading 'Tyburn holidays' of his age. He often returns to the subject in 'The Covent-Garden Journal,' witness the following under date of April 27th:

'This Day five Malefactors were executed at Tyburn. No Heroes within the Memory of Man ever met their Fate with more Boldness and Intrepidity, and consequently with more felonious Glory.'

Again,—

'On Monday last [July 13th] eleven Wretches were executed at Tyburn, and the very next Night one of the most impudent Street-Robberies was committed near St. James's Square; an Instance of the little Force which such Examples have on the Minds of the Populace.'

Elsewhere he says (March 27th), concluding an account which might well be a comment on the last plate but one of Hogarth's 'Apprentice' series:

'The real Fact at present is, that instead of making the Gallows an Object of Terror, our Executions contribute to make it an Object of Contempt in the Eye of a Malefactor; and we sacrifice the Lives of Men, not for [the italics are Fielding's] *the Reformation, but the Diversion of the Populace.*'

Here is a note to Mr. Hartshorne's 'Hanging in Chains':

'On Saturday Morning early [June 6th] the Gibbet on Stamford-Hill Common, on which Hurlock hung in Chains for the Murder of his Bedfellow, a few Years since in the Minories, was cut down, and the Remains of Hurlock carried off.'

The next is a smuggling episode:

'[Monday, September 11th] Last Week a Riding Officer, with the Assistance of some Dragoons, seized upwards of 300 Weight of Tea and some Brandy (which were lodged in an old House) near Goodhurst in Sussex, and conveyed it to the Custom-house.'

In Fielding's century John Broughton (beloved of Borrow!), Jack Slack and Tom Faulkener, were familiar

Eighteenth Century Studies

pugilistic names. At this date, Broughton, 'the unconquered,' had been badly beaten by Slack, and his patron, the Duke of Cumberland, who had made him a Yeoman of the Guard, was said to have lost some £10,000 by his defeat.

'Yesterday [May 13th] at Broughton's Amphitheatre [in Hanway Street, Oxford Street], the Odds on mounting the Stage were two to one against Falkener. About the Middle of the Battle the Odds run against Slack. But the brave Butcher [Slack], after a severe Contest of 27 Minutes and a Half, left his Antagonist prostrate on the Stage, deprived of Sight and in a most miserable Condition. As the House was crouded and Prices were very high, it is computed that there was not less taken than 300*l*.'

The unhappy woman referred to in the ensuing quotation has already been mentioned in the course of this paper. It is only fair to add that she died denying the crime with which she was charged:

'On Tuesday Morning [March 3d] about 8 o'Clock, Miss Mary Blandy was put to the Bar at the Assizes at Oxford, Mr. Baron Legge and Mr. Baron Smythe being both on the Bench, and tried on an Indictment for poisoning her late Father, Mr. Francis Blandy, Town Clerk of Henly upon Thames; and after a Trial, which lasted till half an Hour after Eight in the Evening, she was found guilty, on very full Evidence, and received Sentence to be hanged.'

She was executed on the Castle green at Oxford on Monday, April 6th, in the presence of about 5000 spectators, 'many of whom, and particularly several gentlemen of the university, shed tears,' says Sylvanus Urban. Gibbon, who had just come to Oxford, may have witnessed this occurrence.

'Yesterday [November 9th] a Boy climbed up to the Top of the Door of Westminster-hall, in order to see the Lord-Mayor pass by, and missing his hold fell down, and was so much wounded by the Fall and trod under Foot, before he was got out of the Crowd, that it is thought he cannot live.'

The Covent-Garden Journal

The Lord Mayor in this instance was the Crispe Gascoyne who, in the following year, took part against Fielding over the case of Elizabeth Canning. Here is a reference to another 'person of importance in his Day':

'*Bath, Aug. 24th.* . . . Last Monday a very curious Statue, in white Marble, of Richard Nash, Esq.; done by Mr. Prince Hoare, was erected in the Pump-Room of this City. The Expence is defray'd by several of the principal Inhabitants of this Place, out of Gratitude for his well-known prudent Management for above forty Years, with Regard to the Regulations of the Diversions, the Accommodations of Persons resorting hither, and the general Good of the City.'

Was it not Balzac who wrote 'Où mènent les Mauvais Chemins?' Here, finally, is the epitaph of that 'Charming Betty Careless' whose name figures both in 'Amelia' and in the terrible Bedlam scene of 'The Rake's Progress':

'On Wednesday Evening last [April 22d] was buried from the Parish-House of Covent-Garden, Mrs. Careless, well known for many Years by the Name of *Betty Careless*, by the gay Gentlemen of the Town, of whose Money she had been the Occasion (as it is said) of spending upward of fifty thousand Pounds, tho' at last reduced to receive Alms from the Parish. Almost a certain Consequence attending Ladies in her unhappy Cast of Life.'

TITLED AUTHORS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

‘THE Mob of Gentlemen who wrote with Ease,’—if we may regard Mr. Alexander Pope as a trustworthy historian,—flourished chiefly in the Caroline era. Under Anne and the Georges, perhaps because of the vigour and volubility of Grub Street, they seem to be less manifest. It is true that in Walpole and Park, from Ford Grey, Earl of Tankerville, who died in 1701, to Willoughby Bertie, Earl of Abingdon, who died in 1799, their names make a formidable array. But under the application of one or two simple tests, this imposing schedule speedily proves as unsubstantial as that of Falstaff’s men in buckram. For it is clearly needless to chronicle the existence of a noble author who is credited with a pamphlet on corn bounties which his editor has failed to trace, or to ‘dally with false surmise’ respecting a Duchess who once achieved some passable *bouts rimés* for Lady Miller’s historic vase at Batheaston.

‘The pen which I now take and . . . *brandish*
Has long lain useless in my . . . *standish*;

and so forth, winding up with

‘A muffin Jove himself might . . . *feast on*
If eat with Miller at . . . *Batheaston*’—

scarcely constitute even a third-class ticket to metrical immortality. Nor does it suffice for durable fame that an aristocratic Prelate should have printed a sermon preached at St. Sepulchre’s, or that a belted Earl devoted his laborious days to the composition (however ‘strictly meditated’) of an ‘Essay upon Loans.’ One of the

Titled Authors

ancestors of an illustrious family figures in the record, on the strength, *inter alia*, of certain 'horse receipts' supplied to the 'Gentleman Farrier,' while the claims of others are based on books of which they cannot have done more than suggest the theme. Hooke, of the 'Roman History,' for instance, must certainly have been the working author of the 'Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Dutchess of Marlborough,' a task for which the 'terrible old Sarah' presented him with the handsome honorarium of £5000—a sum which may be regarded as capping the record of the century—for fiction.

There was a further circumstance which disposes of a fair number of worthies at the beginning of Walpole's list, which is, that, although they died in the eighteenth century, they never worked in it. This should at once relieve the conscientious, if regretful, chronicler from including in this paper that 'best good Man with the worst-natured Muse,' Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, whose song 'To all you Ladies now on Land'—'one of the prettiest that ever was made,' says his *protégé*, Prior—has an unexpected modernity of movement, notwithstanding that some of its figures are unmistakably earmarked with Dryden and the *Annus Mirabilis* epoch:

' The King, with wonder and surprise
Will swear the seas grow bold,
Because the tides will higher rise,
Than e'er they did of old;
But let him know it is our tears
Bring floods of grief to Whitehall Stairs.'

Lady Hervey 'weeping like an infant' over Home's 'Douglas,' or Lady Bradshaigh shedding 'pints' upon Richardson's 'Clarissa,' is nothing to this flux of watery lamentation. But although (and the fact must serve as our excuse in dwelling upon Dorset's poem) this famous song was only first *printed* in Lintott's 'Rape of the Lock' Miscellany of May, 1712, it must have been written under the second Charles. Prior says it was composed 'the Night before the Engagement' (*i.e.* the memorable

Eighteenth Century Studies

evening in June, 1665, when the Dutch were beaten off Lowestoft); and the lines

‘ Our paper, pen, and ink, and we
Roll up and down our ships at sea ’—

certainly imply that it was composed afloat. Unfortunately, from a passage in Pepys’s diary, it would seem to have been in existence some six months earlier, and so far from being ‘written with ease,’ Lord Orrery told Johnson that Dorset worked for a week at it. Whereupon the Doctor makes sagacious comment as to the doubtful veracity of splendid stories. But the witness of Pepys is far more fatal to the statement of Prior than the mere tittle-tattle of Orrery.

After Mat. Prior’s magnificent patron, the roll of rhyming peers barely yields another of equal eminence. ‘One of the great poets of this age,’ says the old ‘General Dictionary,’ was John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, a verdict scarcely confirmed by Johnson. For him, the illustrious Sheffield is a writer who ‘sometimes glimmers but never shines,’ who is ‘feebly laborious, and at best but pretty.’ Then why, one might not unreasonably ask, is he included in the good Doctor’s ‘Lives of the Poets’? Still, he had relieved Tangier, fought under Schomberg, and learned warfare from Turenne—things which perhaps bulk larger in the long run than mere verse spinning. But even in verse, Sheffield must be credited with a still marketable quotation, for is it not from His Grace’s ‘Essay on Poetry’ that we get the famous ‘Faultless monster which the world ne’er saw’? And all good Homerists will certainly endorse the following:

‘ Read Homer once, and you can read no more,
For all books else appear so mean, so poor,
Verse will seem prose; but still persist to read,
And Homer’s will be all the books you need.’

It is to another noble warrior, in many respects second only to Marlborough himself, that we are indebted for some of the liveliest love-verses of the century. Swift’s ‘Mordanto,’ Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, of

Titled Authors

whose restless ubiquity it was said that he had 'seen more kings and postilions than any man in Europe,' would hardly detain us by the Platonic letters which he wrote in his volatile old age to Henrietta Howard (afterwards Lady Suffolk). But the septuagenarian stanzas which he addressed to her in the days when he used to perambulate Bath in his ribbon and star, cheapening a chicken and cabbage for dinner, and carrying them away composedly under his arm, certainly deserve remembrance, if only for their admirable opening:

'I said to my heart, between sleeping and waking,
Thou wild thing, that always art leaping or aching,
What black, brown, or fair, in what clime, in what nation,
By turns has not taught thee a pit-a-patation?'

Neither Clio, nor Sappho, nor Prudentia affects this super-sensitive organ.

'But Chloe, so lively, so easy, so fair,
Her wit so genteel, without art, without care,
When she comes in my way—the motion, the pain
The leapings, the achings, return all again.

'O wonderful creature! a woman of reason!
Never grave out of pride, never gay out of season;
When so easy to guess who this angel should be,
Would one think Mrs. Howard ne'er dreamt it was she?'

The final line, as Croker says, is perhaps a little awkward. But Horace Walpole's misquotation—

'Who'd have thought Mrs. Howard ne'er dreamt it was she?'

easily sets it right, and no other Person of Quality has done much better. Halifax, Pope's Bufo 'fed with soft dedication all day long,' rests his claim chiefly upon the 'Town and Country Mouse' parody of Dryden's 'Hind and Panther,' which Peterborough declared was mainly Prior's; while 'Granville the polite' (Lord Lansdowne) lives less by his modest madrigals to Myra (the Countess of Newburgh) than by his connection with the dedication of Pope's 'Windsor Forest':

'GRANVILLE commands; your aid, O Muses, bring!
What muse for GRANVILLE can refuse to sing?'

Eighteenth Century Studies

The chief patrician name in the poetry of the period is really that of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea, whose 'Nocturnal Reverie' Wordsworth mentions, with the above quoted 'Windsor Forest,' in the Preface to his 'Lyrical Ballads,' and who unquestionably ranks high as a student of 'external nature.' Her 'loosed horse' that,—

' as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' th' adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear,'—

might have fed in a paddock at Rydal Mount; and it must always be remembered that from this quiet, home-keeping, country-loving Countess, who played Ardelia to the Daphnis of a mathematical husband, and cultivated nerves upon tea and ratafia, Pope borrowed the 'aromatic pain' of a well-known line in the 'Essay on Man.' Lady Winchilsea, with her pensive note and her descriptive gift, makes us look eagerly for other lady poets. But there are none, for Anna Chamber, Countess Temple, would scarcely have found a printer, if her friend, Horace Walpole, had not possessed a private press at Strawberry Hill. 'The rest is silence,' until we reach, as we shall later, the Popesque eclogues of that very remarkable woman and letter-writer, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Almost equally futile is the quest for dramatists. Apart from a comedy by Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, a couple of Shakespearean tragedies by Lord Sheffield,—Shakespearean, that is to say, in subject,—and the youthful 'Mistakes' of Lord Cornbury, which was printed for Mrs. Porter, the actress, titled authorship seems to have made but scanty contributions to stage literature, since the 'Sleep-Walker' of Lady Craven, another Strawberry Press issue, is merely done out of the French of Madame de Deffand's friend Pont de Veyle. Not the less, with Walpole's sombre and unpleasant 'Mysterious Mother,' it exhausts the dramatic output of the Peerage, and leaves us free to discuss the little group of prose writers, who constitute the strength and sinew (sometimes

Titled Authors

rather relaxed and enervated) of the aristocratic body with whom these pages are concerned.

Of these comes first and foremost, the once famous author of the 'Characteristics,' Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury. Most people know the 'Characteristics' by Baskerville's beautiful reprint of 1773; but Shaftesbury really belongs to the much earlier date of 1711, when the first collected edition appeared; and of that even, no inconsiderable portion had been composed in the previous century. It is his matter rather than his manner which Walpole commends. 'He delivers his doctrine in ecstatic diction, like one of the Magi inculcating philosophic visions to an Eastern auditory'—says the Abbot of Strawberry. Hazlitt, too, speaks of his 'flaunting, flowery, figurative, flirting style,' and Charles Lamb of his 'inflated rhapsodies.' In Lamb's day, Shaftesbury was classed with Sir William Temple as a model in the '*genteel*' way in writing; but as 'Elia' himself employs the same epithet for Watteau ('Graceful as Raphael, as Watteau genteel'), it is manifest that the word must then have borne a significance different from the ignoble one which it is now held to suggest. Perhaps the best idea of the superfine author of 'An Enquiry concerning Virtue or Merit,' and 'A Letter concerning Enthusiasm,' is to be obtained from the portrait by Klosterman prefixed to his first volume. Here he is discovered, magnificently erect beneath a canopy of tumbled drapery, in all the bravery of a voluminous wig, and the 'wild civility' of a silk dressing-gown, worn toga-wise. Beneath his arm he holds a book; and at the back, through a Palladian portico, you catch a glimpse of one of those formal Dutch gardens in which he had lingered so long. If, in Buffon's metaphor, the style is really *l'homme même*, inner as well as outer, then you feel instinctively that such a grandiose personality could only 'condescend' to authorship, and that his written manner would be high-heeled, alembicate, tortured, desultory. Shaftesbury's optimist ethics and ambiguous theology are now (as Gray predicted) but rarely studied, though

Eighteenth Century Studies

you may still read his 'Advice to an Author,' and, with judicious reservations, feel grateful to the intrepid *virtuoso* who invoked ironic benediction on the inventor of miscellaneous writing, and insisted on 'a liberty in decent language to question everything' among gentlemen and friends. For the author of an 'Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour' was a literary force in his time, whose influence is traceable in Addison and Fielding, as well as in Pope and Voltaire, to say nothing of those 'soft moderns' for whom Culture, like the *parmaceti* of Shakespeare's fop, is 'the sovereign'st thing on earth for an inward bruise.'

One of the great writers last-mentioned, in a posthumous fragment, has not inaptly characterised the next philosophic essayist on the list. My Lord Bolingbroke, said the author of 'Tom Jones,' having made the peace of Europe the plaything of his youth, selected, for the pastime of his maturity, the final happiness of mankind. These are not Fielding's exact words, but they convey his meaning. That 'fell genius,' of which Garrick wrote shudderingly, has ceased to frighten children now; and the inquirer who essays the works of Henry St. John in Mallet's *quartos* (after shaking off the dust) will probably discover speedily that they have been more talked about than read. Rhetorical fluency, intellectual dexterity, and distinct persuasive power, will no doubt be allowed to them. But the candid critic who goes farther, must proceed by negatives. He will find no variety, no humour, no real depth of learning, no honest conviction. Bolingbroke's admitted best effort is his 'Letter to Sir W. Windham,' in which, with infinite ingenuity and 'cunning of fence,' he defends his own tortuous and opportunist policy; but, as an author, he is another illustration of the deceptive atmosphere that invests a meteoric figure. 'His life was one scene of the Wonderful throughout,' says Fielding again. His handsome presence, his social charm, his varied accomplishments, nay, his very vices even, made him the idol of his contemporaries, high and low. 'His mind' was 'adorned with the choicest gifts that God

Titled Authors

has yet thought fit to bestow upon the children of men,' said Swift the truthful, who loved and was fascinated by him; 'his conversation united the wisdom of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny, and the wit of Horace,' said poor indiscriminate Orrery. Lord Chesterfield, who, with a calmer pen, has drawn his friend's character—a character in which 'good and ill were perpetually jostling one another,'—bears witness to his eloquence, his penetration, his memory, his acquirements. Of his works he says—'The common bounds of human knowledge were too narrow for his warm and aspiring imagination; he must go *extra flammantia mœnia mundi*, and explore the unknown and unknowable regions of metaphysics, which open an unbounded field for the excursions of an ardent imagination, where endless conjectures supply the defect of unattainable knowledge, and too often usurp both its name and its influence.' In theology, Lord Chesterfield affirms that Bolingbroke was a professed Deist, 'believing in a general Providence, but doubting of, though by no means rejecting (as is commonly supposed) the immortality of the soul and a future state.' 'He died of a cruel and shocking distemper, a cancer in his face, which he endured with firmness. A week before he died, I took my last leave of him with grief; and he returned me his last farewell with tenderness, and said, "God who placed me here will do what He pleases with me hereafter; and He knows best what to do. May He bless you!"'

Some of the remaining 'noble Authors' would loom larger in a longer paper, but can here be little more than glanced at. Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery—not the Orrery just referred to, but another already mentioned as the writer of a comedy—deserves still better remembrance as the translator of those letters of Phalaris that 'led the Brawls' in the famous conflict between the Ancients and the Moderns, of which the prose 'Iliad' is Swift's 'Battle of the Books.' Swift was on the losing side; but that does not affect the extraordinary wit and cleverness of his contribution to the controversy. Another 'highly respectable name' is that of Fielding's friend and

Eighteenth Century Studies

patron, George, Lord Lyttelton, who for all that he was mercilessly pilloried by Smollett as Gosling Scrag in his own day, and has been unanswerably identified in ours with the 'respectable Hottentot' of Chesterfield, was more like a literary man than any of his peers. His 'Dialogues of the Dead'—'Dead Dialogues,' Walpole profanely called them—still yield a faded pleasure to the reader in Harrison's 'British Essayists,' though it is to be feared that his 'History of Henry the Second,' despite the compliment paid to it by a recent historian, is not often consulted by our latter-day Stubbses and Gardiners. A third writer who must come in here, though he died twenty years before Lyttelton, is the 'Paris,' and 'Sporus,' and 'Lord Fanny' of Pope—John, Lord Hervey, who had to wife the 'beautiful Molly Lepel' of an earlier paper.¹ Hervey of the coffin-face and painted cheeks was a kind of genius, a scholar of learning sufficient to revise Conyers Middleton's 'Life of Cicero,' a cultivated writer, a judge of character, a master of remorseless dramatic narrative. His terrible 'Memoirs' really belong to our own age, since it was early in the nineteenth century that they were exhumed from the Ickworth archives, much, says Thackeray, 'as if a Pompeii was opened to us, . . . dug up, with its temples and its games, its chariots, its public places—lupanaria.' One feels, as the author of 'Vanity Fair' did, the need for 'some one to be friends with' in that ghastly, godless record of intrigue and self-seeking, in 'those crowds, pushing, and eager, and struggling—rouged, and lying, and fawning'; and one turns willingly to the brilliant woman who once collaborated with 'Lord Fanny' in an attack upon their common enemy, Pope,—we mean Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Pope had libelled them both (the lady unpardonably) in his first 'Imitation of Horace'; and they retorted in kind, dwelling, with remorseless personality, on his obscure birth and 'wretched little Carcass.' A year later Pope rejoined by the matchlessly

¹ See 'Mary Lepel, Lady Hervey,' in 'Eighteenth Century Vignettes,' 3rd series, 1896, pp. 293-323.

Titled Authors

malignant portrait of Hervey as 'Sporus.' *Tantæ animis cælestibus iræ !*

Lady Mary was an exceedingly witty, shrewd, and strong-, if somewhat coarse-minded woman, entirely honest, entirely truthful, a linguist, a narrator of the first order, and an acute critic of manners and customs both at home and abroad, her experience of which had been diverse and far-reaching. In literature she had excellent discernment. She at once recognised the superlative merit of her kinsman Fielding, in whose 'Tom Jones' she wrote an admiring *Ne plus ultra*; but though she 'blubbered like a milkmaid' over Richardson, she remained fully alive to his defects, and his shortcomings in the depicting of high life. Her correspondence, like Walpole's, will probably gain rather than lose by keeping. Finally, in her 'Town Eclogues' and elsewhere, she showed unusual ability as a verse-writer. One may go farther, and say, as Ben Jonson said of one of his numerous 'sons-in-the-Muses,' that she wrote 'all like a man.' Listen to this, from the lines entitled 'The Lover,' which the late Mr. Locker Lampson quoted in his 'Lyra Elegantiarum,' and which, though coming, and purporting to come, from a feminine pen, has assuredly a masculine accent:

' But when the long hours of publick are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May every fond pleasure that moment endear;
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the aim of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud,
Till, lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
And he may be rude, and yet I may forgive.

' And that my delight may be solidly fix'd,
Let the friend and the lover be handsomely mix'd,
In whose tender bosom my soul may confide,
Whose kindness can soothe me, whose counsel can guide.
From such a dear lover as here I describe,
No danger should fright me, no millions should bribe:
But till this astonishing creature I know,
As I long have lived chaste, I will keep myself so.'

Wortley Montagu, Lyttelton, Hervey,—these, it will

Eighteenth Century Studies

be seen, are not only names in the Peerage, but names in Literary History. The claim to that distinction of the two writers to whom we now come, is greater still. It was the pleasing fashion of the magazines of the last century to amuse themselves with Parallels in the Manner of Plutarch; and Lord Orford (Horace Walpole) and Lord Chesterfield lend themselves easily to such an exercise. Both were born in the purple, and remembered it; both were wits and fine gentlemen; both had an incontestable faculty for authorship, combined with a patrician contempt for the pen. Both dabbled in politics, although one was a statesman of eminence, the other an amateur; both, like their common friend, Lady Hervey, found their ideal life and models in French society; both, with the dignity of philosophers, endured the long-drawn tedium of an infirm and joyless old age. 'I cannot go up and downstairs,' says Walpole, 'without being led by a servant. It is *tempus abire* for me; *lusi satis*.' 'I feel a gradual decay,' says Chesterfield, 'though a gentle one; and I think I shall not tumble, but slide gently to the bottom of the hill of life. When that will be, I neither know nor care, for I am very weary.' In their work there are differences, although, as respects their correspondence, it is probable that both wrote without any definite idea—certainly without any professed intention—of future publication. But except some excellent 'Characters' (from which we have already quoted in speaking of Bolingbroke) and the unlucky papers in the 'World' which provoked the historical retort of Johnson, Lord Chesterfield's occasional efforts are practically forgotten, and his reputation rests mainly upon his letters to his son and his godson. These, as is well known, are less *nouvelles à-la-main* than lay sermons, inculcating a special code or scheme of conduct, which may be described roughly as the cultus of the imperturbable. As is also equally well known, they, and especially the earlier series, contain maxims which show extraordinary moral insensibility,—an insensibility which is the more culpable when it is remembered to whom their injunctions were addressed.

Titled Authors

But these reservations made at starting, they will be found to be packed with the varied teaching of a shrewd criticism of life, and of a close, if cynical observation of mankind; and although their main doctrine is the converse of *esse quam videri*, those who think nothing is to be learned from them but the manners of a dancing master and the morals of a courtesan, are probably more biassed by the recollection of a prejudiced epigram, than influenced by a study of the letters themselves. The correspondence of Walpole, on the other hand, is of a different type. No one could call that didactic, or hortatory, or even learned. But, if Chesterfield gives us the theory of eighteenth-century life, as he conceived it, Walpole shows us that life in practice, as he lived it. It would be hard to find a more vivacious, a more amusing, a more original chronicler; hard to find a more lively and brilliant chronicle. 'Nothing,' says Thackeray truly, 'can be more cheery than Horace's letters. Fiddles sing all through them: wax-lights, fine dresses, fine jokes, fine plate, fine equipages, glitter and sparkle there; never was such a brilliant, jiggling, smirking Vanity Fair as that through which he leads us.' His anecdotal gossip keeps the reader continually on the alert; his *bons mots* surprise and delight, his phraseology and unexpected use of words add the finishing piquancy of touch. His descriptions of places and events are amazingly fresh and vivid; his perception of character of the keenest, and even his antipathies and little affectations (when they do not traverse our own) have a particularly stimulating savour. Open him where you will, you are sure of something that will annotate, if it does not constitute, the social history of the day.

Upon the whole, Horace Walpole, who himself wrote of Noble Authors, was, in his own time, the most illustrious of them all. In the letters, memoirs and minor verse which are their function, he was unrivalled; but he was also the writer of two books which, in any station of life, would have brought him a literary reputation, 'The Anecdotes of Painting' and 'The Castle of Otranto.'

THE STORY OF THE 'SPECTATOR'

AMONG the items of intelligence in that unrivalled confidential news-letter which Swift was in the habit of scribbling off periodically to Mrs. Dingley and Mrs. Johnson at Dublin, there are frequent references to the 'Spectator' and its predecessor, the 'Tatler.' In September, 1710, when the 'Journal to Stella' begins, the 'Tatler' had already reached its two hundred and nineteenth number, and it must have been well known to Swift's correspondents, since he speaks of it much as folk might speak of any paper that everybody is sure to see. Have they 'smoakt' his letter (an admirable effort by the way) concerning the corruptions of style? It is greatly liked; and he himself thinks it 'a pure one.' Next he is at work on a 'poetical "Description of a Shower in London,"'¹ which he has finished,—'all but the beginning.' Why does '*Madam Stell*' persist that he wrote 'Shaver'?—he asks later. Elsewhere comes a reference to his share in Addison's 'Adventures of a Shilling,'² the original hint for which Addison admits was given to him by a friend with 'an inexhaustible Fund of Discourse.' Then again we learn that Swift has drawn up, conjointly with Rowe and Prior, a protest against the substitution of the words 'Great Britain' for 'England,' a proposal which is still under debate.³ A page or two farther on, the long-pending misunder-

¹ 'Tatler,' No. 238.

² 'Tatler,' No. 249.

³ 'In Scotland 35,000 signatures have been put to a memorial asking that "Great Britain" and "British" should be substituted for "England" and "English" in State documents and official references to national institutions like the Army' ('St. James's Gazette,' June 3, 1897).

The Story of the 'Spectator'

standing with Steele has reached an acute stage, and the record bears witness to it. The 'Tatlers,' it is alleged, have fallen off; he never sees either Addison or Steele; he has sent them no more hints. After this final announcement (more deadly even than St. John's Stamp Act!), one is prepared to hear of the collapse of the paper. Oddly enough, it *does* collapse in the very next entry. 'Steele's last Tatler came out to-day.' 'It was time, for he grew cruel dull and dry.' But Swift's love of letters is greater than his irritation against his alienated friends; and two months after, he is writing enthusiastically of Steele's fresh venture. 'Have you seen the "Spectator" yet, a paper that comes out every day? 'Tis written by Mr. Steele, who seems to have gathered new life, and have a new fund of wit; it is in the same nature as his *Tatlers*, and they have all of them had something pretty.' The praise was not undeserved. By March 16, 1711, when the above was written, the 'Spectator' had been in vigorous existence for a fortnight. The short-faced sage was already taking the measure of mankind; and if Sir Roger de Coverley had been but broadly outlined, the 'Vision of Public Credit' had been penned, the story of Inkle and Yarico told, and Swift himself—though Mrs. Pilkington says he 'had not laugh'd above twice' in his life—might reasonably have relaxed his muscles a little over the humours of Nicolini and the Lion. The 'Spectator,' in short, had already become not merely an indispensable 'Part of the Tea Equipage' (as claimed in its tenth issue), but a necessary of intellectual life. The smart young Templars, in their gorgeous dressing-gowns and strawberry sashes, were already crying out for it at Serle's and the Grecian; it was permanently *en lecture* at Will's and the St. James's Coffee-house; solemn quidnuncs and deliberate club-oracles, like Mr. Nisby of the 'Citizen's Journal,' were beginning to take it for the text of their daily lucubrations; while Mrs. Betty regularly carried it upstairs at noon with Clarinda's dish of chocolate, between the newest patterns of Mr. Lute-string the mercer and the latest *poulet* from Mr. Froth.

Eighteenth Century Studies

The farewell number of the 'Tatler' appeared on the 2nd of January, 1711; the first number of the 'Spectator' on the 1st of March following. In appearance the two papers were not dissimilar. Both were single *folio* leaves in double column; both—at all events when the 'Tatler' was nearing its end—consisted of a solitary essay, headed by a Latin quotation and followed by a series of advertisements. Each was equally open to the charge, which had been made by an injured correspondent, of being offered to the world on 'Tobacco Paper' in 'Scurvy Letter.' The only material difference was that the 'Tatler' was published three times a week; and the 'Spectator' was published daily, Sundays excepted,—a difference scarcely enough in itself, one would suppose, to justify a fresh departure. But why the 'Tatler' was prematurely concluded at the two hundred and seventy-first number, and the 'Spectator' substituted for it, remains a problem the solution of which is still to seek. Steele's explanation is, that he had become individually identified with 'Mr. Bickerstaff,' and this being so, his own fallible personality was powerless to give authority to his office of Censor. 'I shall not carry my Humility so far as to call my self a vicious Man, but at the same Time must confess, my Life is at best but pardonable. And with no greater Character than this, a Man would make but an indifferent Progress in attacking prevailing and fashionable Vices, which Mr. *Bickerstaff* has done with a Freedom of Spirit that would have lost both its Beauty and Efficacy, had it been pretended to by Mr. Steele.' Upon the face of them these are sufficient reasons, and they would have sufficed had it not been for the fact that the 'Tatler' was almost immediately succeeded by another paper which—as Swift says truly—was 'in the same nature.' But it has also been suggested that there were other reasons at which Steele himself, in his valedictory words, hints vaguely. 'What I find is the least excusable Part of all this Work'—he tells us—'is, that I have in some Places in it touched upon Matters which concern both the Church and State.' This *obiter dictum* opens too long and too perplexed an

The Story of the 'Spectator'

enquiry to be here pursued in detail. Briefly stated, it would seem that certain utterances of Mr. Bickerstaff, not of necessity from Steele's pen, had offended the Lord Treasurer, Harley, who had come into power while the 'Tatler' was in progress, and that with those utterances its cessation was in some obscure way connected. A certain amount of colour is given to this contention in a tract by John Gay which expressly says that the 'Tatler' was laid down 'as a sort of submission to, and composition with, the Government, for some past offences.'¹ But here again it is to be observed that the 'Spectator,' though at the outset professing neutrality between Whigs and Tories, neither observed nor engaged to observe a total abstinence from politics, so that, after all, caprice, or the weariness of the work which Swift alleges, may have played a foremost part in those 'Thousand nameless Things' which made it irksome to Steele to continue to personate Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff. One circumstance, however, is beyond all question. Whether Defoe's 'Review' or the 'Athenian Mercury' or the 'London Gazette' had most to do with the establishment of the 'Tatler' may be debatable; but there can be no doubt that the 'Spectator' is the legitimate successor of the 'Tatler.' The 'Tatler' is the 'Spectator' in the making; and the 'Spectator' is the developed and perfected 'Tatler,' which, beginning with little save the *Quicquid agunt Homines* of its motto, gradually grew more ethical and less topical, restricting itself at last almost exclusively to those separate essays on single subjects which we are still accustomed to associate with the name of the 'Spectator.'

And if it can be proved that we owe the 'Spectator' to the 'Tatler,' it is equally demonstrable that we owe Addison to Steele. When that quondam trooper, Christian Hero, and stage-moralist, Queen Anne's Gazetteer, casting about for something to supplement an income which had always consisted largely of expectations, hit

¹ See 'The Present State of Wit, in a Letter to a Friend in the Country,' 1711.

Eighteenth Century Studies

upon the project of a paper which should combine the latest Foreign Intelligence with the newest Gossip of the Town, Addison was Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. At this date, his contributions to literature consisted practically of an Opera of 'Rosamond' which had failed; of a volume of travels on the continent which might have been written at home, like Du Halde's 'China'; and of the 'Campaign,' a long-incubated¹ 'Gazette in Rhyme' concerning the Battle of Blenheim, which included a fortunate simile about an angel in a whirlwind. With Steele's literary venture came Addison's literary opportunity. When, in the new periodical which his old school-fellow's inventive spirit had started, he recognised a remark of his own, he sent him a contribution; and although it was some time before he began to write regularly, it was clear from the first that he had found a favourable vehicle for his unique and hitherto latent gifts of humorous observation. Steele's own qualifications were, of course, by no means contemptible. He was a sympathetic critic; he had the true journalistic faculty of taking fire readily; his knowledge of the contemporary theatre was not only exceptional but experimental; and he had the keenest eye for the ridiculous, the kindest heart for sorrow and distress. But there can be little doubt that in the finely-wrought La Bruyère-like sketches of Tom Folio, Ned Softly, and the Political Upholsterer, in the Rabelaisian 'Frozen Voices' and the delightful 'Adventures of a Shilling,' Addison at once attained a level higher than anything at which his friend had aimed. Re-acting upon Steele's own efforts, these papers stimulated him to new ambitions, and gave to the latter half of the 'Tatler,' as he himself admitted, an elegance, a purity, and a correctness which had been no initial part of his hastily-conceived and hurriedly-executed scheme. 'I fared'—he said, in words which have become historical—'like a distressed Prince who calls in a powerful Neighbour

¹ 'Next week will be published the long expected poem, by Joseph Addison, Esq.: called The Campaign and sold by Mr. Jacob Tonson' ('The Diverting Post,' Dec. 2-9, 1704).

The Story of the 'Spectator'

to his Aid; I was undone by my Auxiliary; when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without Dependence on him.' And whatever may be the secret history of the cessation of the 'Tatler,' incapacity to carry it on can hardly be urged as an explanation. For, when it came to an end, not only had its original projector raised his own standard, but during the course of his enterprise, he had secured the services of an anonymous assistant whose equipment in the way of delicate irony and whimsical fancy has never yet been surpassed.

Under these auspices then, the 'Spectator' made its first appearance on the 1st of March, 1711. Of the circumstances which preceded that appearance nothing definite has been recorded. Some outline, some scheme of campaign should—one would think—have been determined upon before publication, but the information which has come down to us tends rather the other way. Tickell, who, ten years later, edited Addison's works with a strong bias in his deceased patron's favour, says, in apologising for including one of Steele's papers among Addison's, that 'the Plan of the "Spectator," as far as regards the feigned Person of the Author, and of the several characters that compose his Club, was projected in concert with Sir RICHARD STEELE,'—a statement which some later critics have most unaccountably interpreted to mean that the honours belong exclusively to Addison. But almost in the next sentence Tickell goes on—'As for the distinct Papers, they were never or seldom shewn to each other, by the respective Authors,'—which is hardly in favour of an elaborate programme or associated action. Indeed, apart from a certain rough agreement as to the first two numbers or 'Prefatory Discourses,' there seems to have been no such programme, and any assertion to the contrary prompts the suspicion that the 'Spectator,' notwithstanding the famous *nocturna versate manu, versate diurna* of Johnson, is more talked about than read. In Number 1, which is undeniably by Addison, he sketched lightly and with his own inimitable touch, that taciturn 'Looker-on,' whose 'Sheet-full of Thoughts' was to appear every morning

Eighteenth Century Studies

Sundays excepted. Following this, in Number 2, which is as unmistakably Steele's, was dashed off the little group of 'select Friends' who were to make up the 'Spectator' Club, headed by the kit-cat of Sir Roger de Coverley. The other five members were a Templar, a Clergyman, a Soldier (Captain Sentry) a Merchant (Sir Andrew Freeport) and Will Honeycomb, an elderly fine gentleman and Man of Pleasure. A Committee from this body was to sit nightly in order to inspect 'all such Papers as may contribute to the Advancement of the Publick Weal.' Some of Addison's advocates have attempted to transfer the credit of this second number from Steele to Addison by suggesting that the characters were 'touched' by the latter. But even if the style did not exhibit all the indications of that hasty genius which contrived the 'Trumpet Club' in the 'Tatler,' the paper is disfigured by a piece of negligent bad taste which makes it more than probable that Addison never saw it until it was published. The passage concerning beggars and gipsies in the description of Sir Roger, is one which Steele's heedless pen may conceivably have thrown off in a hurry; but it is also one to which Addison—assuming him at this stage to have had the slightest mental idea of the character whose last hours he was afterwards to describe with such effective simplicity—could never have given his *imprimatur*. It is an outrage far less excusable than the historical lapse committed by Tickell, when, in No. 410, he allowed the Knight for a moment to mistake a woman of the town for a 'Woman of Honour,'—a mistake, after all, no worse than that later, and more memorable misadventure, where an entire family circle were deceived in the identity of my Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilelmina Amelia Skeggs.

The truth would appear to be, that the character of the Worcestershire baronet, so happily developed in the sequel under the pens of the two friends, was, at the outset, rather a lucky accident of invention than the first stage in a preconceived creation; and many numbers succeeded to Steele's description of the Club before Sir Roger de Coverley was again seriously presented to the reader.

The Story of the 'Spectator'

He is indeed mentioned incidentally three or four times in subsequent 'Spectators,' but it is not until No. 106 that he really begins to assume the importance which has made him a personage in English Literature. In accordance with a hint casually dropped in No. 46, Addison in No. 106 gives an account of the Coverley household with its old-fashioned ways, which include an old chaplain who understands 'a little of Back-Gammon,'¹ and reads the sermons of Tillotson and Barrow from his pulpit instead of his own compositions. Steele came after with another paper, on the Coverley servants; and Addison followed that by the masterpiece of Will Wimble, the poor gentleman and younger brother, who is almost as well known in letters as the Knight himself. In the next of the series, Steele, with a hand scarcely less skilful than that of his colleague, describes the family picture gallery; and certainly nothing in Addison is happier than its closing touch about the ancestor who 'narrowly escaped being killed in the Civil Wars' by being 'sent out of the Field upon a private Message, the Day before the Battel of Worcester.' Three papers farther on, Addison depicts a country Sunday; and Steele responds with an account of Sir Roger and the 'perverse beautiful Widow' of the introductory sketch. Then we have Sir Roger hare-hunting; Sir Roger on his way to the Country-Assizes delivering the time-honoured judgment that 'much might be said on both Sides'; and Sir Roger interviewing the Gipsies. After this, very little is heard of the Knight until he comes to London, and goes (by this time always with Addison) to Westminster Abbey, to Drury-Lane Playhouse (to see Anne Oldfield as Andromache in the 'Distrest Mother' of Mr. Phillips), and to the Spring-Garden at Vauxhall. The last record of him—for we may neglect the ambiguous tavern-incident referred to in our previous paragraph—is the admirable letter, again by Addison, in which Mr. Biscuit, the butler,

¹ Swift apparently thought this accomplishment a *sine qua non* in a chaplain. 'Can the parson of the parish play at backgammon?'—he asks Lady Queensberry, when he is proposing to visit her at Amesbury.

Eighteenth Century Studies

describes his master's last illness and death. It has been sometimes asserted that Addison, after the fashion of Cervantes, killed his hero to prevent greater liberties being taken with him; but the interval between the Tickell escapade and the butler's despatch is too wide to establish any definite connection between the respective occurrences, and, moreover, the Club itself was obviously being wound up. Of its remaining members the authors never made any material use. In the allotment of the characters, it is but reasonable to suppose that Addison (in addition to Sir Roger) would have devoted himself to the Templar and Will Honeycomb, while the Soldier, the Merchant, and the Clergyman would fall to the share of Steele. In practice, nevertheless, nothing so definite ever came to pass. After Steele's first sketch in No. 2, the Clergyman only once re-appears, while the Templar is little but a name. Sir Andrew Freeport delivers himself occasionally upon matters of trade, and Captain Sentry occupies a couple of papers. As for the gallant Will Honeycomb, though he can scarcely be styled a *personnage muet*, his chief contribution to the interest of the fable is the marriage to a country girl (in a grogram gown) with which he quits both the Town and the scene. Whether these portraits had actual originals is doubtful. Tickell, who should have been well informed, regarded the whole of the characters as 'feigned,' and Steele in No. 262 expressly disclaims the delineation of his contemporaries. The reader, he says, would think the better of him, if he knew the pains he was at in qualifying what he wrote after such a manner, that nothing might be interpreted as aimed at private persons. But his disclaimer has been as futile as the disclaimers of Hogarth and Fielding; and, as usual, Sir Roger and Will Wimble, Captain Sentry and the Widow, have not been allowed to want for models.

The Coverley sequence and the proceedings of the Club must not, however, be supposed to constitute the sole theme of the 'Spectator,' or even to present its chief features of interest. Something more than the fitful apparition of a few figures whose sayings and doings

The Story of the 'Spectator'

scarcely occupy fifty papers out of five hundred and fifty-five, must clearly have been required to allure and retain the interest of subscribers whose enthusiasm survived an increased price and a prohibitive Stamp Tax. At this time of day, it is probable that the graver and more critical efforts of Addison, and the edifying lay-sermon, which represents the 'Christian Hero' side in Steele would not find a very attentive audience. But it must be remembered that, when they were first penned, it was a new thing to discover poetry in 'Chevy Chase' and the 'Children in the Wood,' or to include, in pages professedly occupied by social sketches and sub-humorous satire, disquisitions upon Death, Benevolence, Ambition, and Solitude. Under Anna Augusta, Steele's moral essays and Addison's criticisms enjoyed and deserved a vogue which new methods of analysis and other fashions of exhortation have long made impossible; and in the old *Beauties*, these papers occupy a far larger place than the sketches of contemporary manners and the studies of individual types which to us now form the main attraction of the 'Spectator.' Of these studies and sketches there are enough and to spare. Neither Addison nor Steele, it is true, ever excelled the 'first sprightly runnings' of the 'Tatler,' and it may be doubted if either afterwards produced anything that really rivals Mr. Bickerstaff's 'Visit to a Friend' or (in its kind) the perennial 'Ned Softly' of the earlier paper. On the other hand the 'Meditations in Westminster Abbey,' the 'Vision of Mirzah,' the 'Everlasting Club,' the admirable 'Citizen's' and 'Fine Lady's' Journals, and the various papers on Headdresses, Hoods, Patches, Fans and a hundred other themes belong to Addison and the 'Spectator,' while Steele, in the same pages, has many essays which reach the level of his excellent 'Death of Estcourt,' his 'Ramble from Richmond to London,' his 'Stage-Coach Journey' and his 'Story of Brunetta and Phyllis.' Nothing can give a better notion of the sustained fertility of the two friends than the statement that, out of the above-mentioned total of five hundred and fifty-five numbers, more

Eighteenth Century Studies

than five hundred were written by Steele and the still nameless 'Auxiliary,' to whom, at the close, he again, over his own signature, pays grateful tribute. 'I am indeed much more proud of his long continued Friendship, than I should be of the Fame of being thought the Author of any Writings which he himself is capable of producing. I remember when I finished the "Tender Husband," I told him there was nothing I so ardently wished, as that we might some time or other publish a Work written by us both, which should bear the name of the *Monument*, in Memory of our Friendship.'

But if Addison's assistance as an anonymous contributor to his friend's enterprise had its advantages, it must be confessed that, as far as that friend is concerned, it also had its drawbacks. Although at first the result was to identify Steele with the entire work much more comprehensively than the circumstances warranted (the old *folio* titles of the 'Spectator,' in fact, attribute the whole of the papers to him),¹ upon the other hand he occasionally became personally responsible for utterances not his own, which had given grave offence. So that if, in Swift's words, 'he flourish'd by imputed Wit,' he also suffered by imputed Satire. 'Many of the Writings now published as his [Addison's],' says Steele in his letter to Congreve, 'I have been very patiently traduced and calumniated for; as they were pleasantries and oblique strokes upon certain of the wittiest men of the Age.' When, in Tickell's edition of 1721, Addison's contributions to the 'Tatler' were definitely identified, and their extent and import thoroughly apprehended, people began—perhaps naturally at first—to transfer a disproportionate amount of the credit to Addison, and to assign a much lower place to Steele, who was sometimes spoken of as if he were no more than a mere colourless mediocrity, to whose good fortune it had fallen to farm a genius. This reaction, in spite of

¹ One of these, now before us, runs — 'A Compleat Sett of the SPECTATORS, By Richard Steele, Esq., London: Printed for S. Buckley and J. Tonson, and sold by A. Baldwin, near the Oxford Arms in Warwick Lane, MDCCXIII.'

The Story of the 'Spectator'

the protests of such critics as Lamb, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt, may be said to have culminated in Macaulay's brilliant 'Edinburgh' article of 1843 on Miss Aikin's 'Addison.' Here Steele is systematically depressed to exalt his friend, whose worst essay, in the great critical special pleader's opinion, was as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors. Twelve years after, in March, 1855, Mr. John Forster valiantly took up the cudgels for Steele in the 'Quarterly,' and from this date Steele's character may be said to have been gradually rehabilitated. That Addison was the major contributor to the 'Spectator,' and that he had gifts of style and expression to which his colleague could not pretend, may be granted. But it must also be granted that, as compared with that colleague, he had some very manifest advantages. He was, and remained, a contributor only, working at his ease; and, in any failure of fancy, he could, as Tickell allows, fall back upon long-accumulated material, such as his essays on Milton, Wit, Imagination and the like, to serve his turn. Steele, on the contrary, was not only responsible editor, but sub-editor as well, and when matter or invention ran short, he was often obliged to 'make up' with the communications of his correspondents.¹ In the way of reserve 'copy,' he had nothing but a few of his own old love-letters to his wife and a quotation or two from the 'Christian Hero.' These conditions were not favourable to 'correctness,' if 'correctness' had been his aim; and they should be taken into account in assessing the relative merits of the two friends, who, it must be noted, never succeeded as well when they worked apart as they succeeded when they worked together. Although they may not have revised each other's writings, it was the conjunction of their individualities which made the 'Spectator' what it remains,—the most readable of the Eighteenth-Century Essayists; and in this conjunction Steele was the

¹ 'When a Man has engaged to keep a Stage-Coach,' says he in 'Tatler' No. 12, 'he is obliged, whether he has Passengers or not, to set out.' Fielding has the same thought in the 'initial essay' to Book II. of 'Tom Jones.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

originating, and Addison the elaborating, intellect. The primary invention, the creative idea, came from Steele; the shaping power, the decorative art from Addison.¹ What Steele with his 'veined humanity' and ready sympathy derived from 'conversation'—to use the eighteenth-century term for intercourse with the world—he flung upon his paper then and there without much labour of selection; what Addison perceived in his environment when—to use Steele's phrase—he began 'to look about him and like his company,' he carried carefully home to carve into some gem of graceful raillery or refined expression. Each writer has, naturally, the defects of his qualities. If Addison delights us by his finish, he repels us by his restraint and absence of fervour; if Steele is careless, he is always frank and genial. Addison's papers are faultless in their art, and in this way achieve an excellence which is beyond the reach of Steele's quicker and more impulsive nature. But for words which the heart finds when the head is seeking; for phrases glowing with the white heat of a generous emotion; for sentences which throb and tingle with manly pity or courageous indignation—we must turn to the essays of Steele.

¹ What follows—to obviate laborious paraphrase—is borrowed almost textually from the writer's life of Steele (1886).

PERCY AND GOLDSMITH

‘PRELATE and Poet’—these are the alliterative titles with which the Rev. Thomas Percy is dignified by his latest biographer, Miss Alice C. C. Gaussen. That he was a prelate may perhaps be held to ‘explain itself’—as Goldsmith would say—since he died Bishop of Dromore. But it cannot be pretended that, either as priest or theologian, he was a prelate of marked distinction. No doubt, with many of his day, he was an accomplished scholar. He prepared a key to the New Testament; and he retranslated the ‘Song of Solomon.’ But he left no monumental work on the scale of Lowth or Butler; he printed but few sermons; and as in Overton and Relton’s ‘History of the Church in the Eighteenth Century’ he is not even mentioned, it must be assumed that he took no conspicuous part either in Church affairs or in the Evangelical revival. As a poet pure and simple, his reputation—never very high—is now depressed. His ‘famous’ lyric ‘O Nancy, wilt thou go with me?’—of which the motive is to be found in Nat. Lee, and the opening couplet echoes Allan Ramsay—even if it were more original, could scarcely be held to rank as high as the pastorals of his friend Shenstone. In reality—for all that Burns called it a ‘charming song’—it is not much better than the generality of those Orphic ditties which were nightly quavered or warbled, by Beard or Mrs. Bland, from the ‘bloom-coloured’ orchestra at Vauxhall. Of the ‘Hermit of Warkworth,’ a later and more academic effort, it is sufficient to quote the verdict of Wordsworth, certainly an unprejudiced critic, who condemned its diction as scarcely distinguishable from the glossy and unfeeling language of its day—a condemnation which must be held to be confirmed by Johnson’s doubtful praise of it as ‘pretty enough.’ With regard to the ‘Friar of Orders Gray,’

Eighteenth Century Studies

familiar in most anthologies as Percy's most individual imitation, it has not only the ill-fortune to come after Goldsmith's 'Edwin and Angelina,' which it resembles; but it shares with that now somewhat discredited masterpiece the disadvantage of being neither completely freed from the old formal vocabulary, nor wholly surrendered to the unlesioned utterance of natural emotion. In addition to which, it is, as its author allows, and as Goldsmith calls it, a 'cento.'

To what then, it will be asked, is Percy's unquestioned position in English literature to be attributed? The answer is, that it must in large measure be traced to the singularly opportune appearance in 1765 of his 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.' It was not alone that this collection—based primarily on a ragged MS. book, rescued from a fire-lighting housemaid—consisted of fragments of hitherto unknown ballad minstrelsy, for these of themselves might have proved unmarketable: but coming as it did between the visions of Macpherson and the forgeries of Chatterton, and being moreover cleverly adapted to eighteenth-century tastes by its editor's connecting links and continuations, it supplied precisely what many of the public were thirsting to receive. Tired of the conventional cup of Pope, they were yet unfitted for Castalian over-proof, and the Percy infusion cheered without inebriating. To Johnson's sturdy conservatism, it is true, the new-fangled fashion of archaic artlessness seemed—in spite of his friendship for Percy—no better than 'lifeless imbecility'; but to the coming generation, aflame with new ideas—to Coleridge and Southey, to Wordsworth and Scott, the 'Reliques,' even in their 'ballad-and-water' stage, offered by their opposition to almost every canon of the reigning but not ruling Muse, a new and untravelled world of imaginative song. Listen to Scott as a boy: 'I overwhelmed my school-fellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I

Percy and Goldsmith

believe I ever read a book so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm.' Since Scott so wrote, the original 'Percy folio' has been published,¹ with considerable readjustment of the Bishop's reputation, inasmuch as it is now generally admitted that the older fragments are immeasurably superior to the editorial restorations. Nevertheless, as critics have pointed out with perfect justice, it may be doubted if, without Percy's contemporary 'medium'—to use a studio term—these fragments would have secured their eighteenth-century currency. Whether they establish or do not establish Percy's personal poetic claim, their influence at a critical moment upon the study of our ancient English poetry, and the part they played in the preliminary stages of the subsequent revival inaugurated by the 'Lyrical Ballads,' cannot now be questioned or gainsaid.

This may appear a grudging estimate of the book that Sir George Douglas, in his brief 'Preface' to Miss Gaussen's labours, rightly terms an epoch-making work. Yet it may be observed that even Percy himself could hardly have been disturbed by it, since, either out of real modesty or false pride, he seems never to have cared greatly to be regarded as what M. Alceste in the 'Misanthrope' calls a *misérable auteur*. From the first he shrank shyly from needless publicity. His earliest efforts were studiously anonymous; and, at all events in later life, he professed to attach but slender importance to his more secular labours of the pen, the 'Reliques' in particular. The BISHOP OF DROMORE, he told the advocates of that anthology in 1784, must not be connected with the 'sins and follies of his youth.' The Mitre had displaced the Muse; and he had come to doubt whether he had not wasted his time 'in bestowing any attention on a parcel of old ballads.'²

¹ 'Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript,' edited by John W. Hales and the late F. J. Furnivall, four vols., 1867-68.

² This is confirmed by Miss L. M. Hawkins, who writes that when her father pressed the Bishop to revise the 'Reliques,' he declined, saying 'that he had infinitely more pleasure in his success in having obtained from the Government, money to build two churches in his diocese, than he could ever derive from the reception of his "Reliques."' ('Anecdotes,' etc., 1822, i, 314.)

Eighteenth Century Studies

These are pronouncements which should find scant favour with those who believe the literary calling to be to the full as reputable, and even as responsible, as the clerical; and they would be more persuasive, if we did not know that the Bishop was quite contented that his son and nephew should devote their energies to following his lead. But this episcopal attitude on his part leaves us free—before entering on our immediate purpose—to limit ourselves to some preliminary account of him as a person of importance in his day, as an associate of persons of importance, and, minor foibles excepted, as a very worthy, learned, and dignified gentleman.

He was born at Bridgnorth in Shropshire, in a picturesque old house at the bottom of the Cartway—his grandfather and father being grocers. No less he claimed to be descended from the ancient Earls of Northumberland, and ‘had his claims allow’d’ by the family. After being educated at the local grammar-school, he obtained an exhibition, and matriculated at Christ Church. While at Oxford he became known to Gray, whose earliest English production, the ‘Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College,’ was printed by Dodsley in 1747, during the first year of Percy’s Oxford residence. He seems even to have begun recollections of Gray which, however, got no farther than a few lines; and, like the story in ‘Hudibras,’ broke off abruptly—in the middle of the Peterhouse water episode. At this date, from a note of Gray, Percy appears to have called himself Piercy. B.A. in 1750, and M.A. in 1753, he was presented by his College in the latter year to the living of Easton Maudit in Northamptonshire, to which, three years later, his neighbour Lord Sussex added the living of Wilby, both of which benefices he held until 1782, when he became Bishop of Dromore. At Easton Maudit, where (like Sterne and the ‘Vicar of Wakefield’) he had a thatched parsonage, and a pleasant garden to boot, with a turnpike-road hard by leading straight to London, he took up his abode in 1756, intending to divide his time, in the true *Quid-dulcius-otio-litterato* spirit, ‘between books and pleasure.’ As yet, the ‘peculiar chosen

Percy and Goldsmith

female'—for he uses the objectionable term favoured, among others, by Borrow and the excellent Mr. Collins of 'Pride and Prejudice'—had not revealed herself; and a bachelor life seemed more desirable than marriage. But one cannot with impunity play at hay-making with the 'fair sex' (here he would have come under the condemnation of Swift!) in vicarage closes; and in April 1759, he married the Nancy of his choice, Miss Anne Gutteridge, a very amiable, and, from her portrait, not unprepossessing young lady, who made him an excellent wife of the Mrs. Primrose type, albeit she did not complete the programme of his song by 'receiving his parting breath,' since he survived her for some years.

This, however, is to anticipate. At Easton Maudit six children were born; and, in spite of an admitted incompatibility between the Muses and matrimony, he dabbled in literature. At the end of 1761 he put forth 'Hau Kiou Choaan,' a translation of a Chinese novel which he dedicated to the Countess of Sussex; in 1762 succeeded 'Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese'; and in 1763 some versions of Runic Poetry. He also occupied himself in editions, never issued, of Buckingham and Surrey,—the latter a duty subsequently undertaken by Dr. Nott. In the summer of 1764 he was visited at Easton Maudit by Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams. At this time Percy was meditating the 'Reliques,' and tradition represents him as pacing a little terrace since known as 'Dr. Johnson's Walk' and discussing with his illustrious, but not entirely sympathetic, friend the publication of the collection. Johnson stayed several months at Easton Maudit, occupying himself, among other things, in reading right through Ubeda's 'Felixmarte of Hircania'—the 'stiff and dry' style of which can scarcely have increased the liveliness of his environment—and in feeding Mrs. Percy's ducks. He liked the lady, who, in a tempestuous moment, he declared had more sense than her husband; and he left behind him, as a memento, an ink-horn which is still preserved by Percy's descendants.

With 1765 came the first edition of 'Reliques,' already

Eighteenth Century Studies

sufficiently dealt with. This led to the compiler's introduction to Sir Hugh Smithson, created, in the next year, first Duke of Northumberland. He had married Lady Betty Seymour, daughter of Lord Hertford, a very breezy, unconventional, and good-humoured *grande dame*, for whose amusement Goldsmith privately printed his 'Edwin and Angelina,' and who herself figures in Walpole's 'Titled Authors' as the gifted composer of some *bouts-rimés* on Lady Miller's Batheaston muffins. Percy later became tutor to the Duke's younger son, Lord Algernon Percy, and was subsequently appointed chaplain to the family. This 'unexpected favour from Heaven' must have sadly interrupted the Easton Maudit domesticities. For upwards of six months every year during fifteen years or more, he was absent at Alnwick or Northumberland House on duty, and when, in 1769, he became chaplain to George III., this period was increased by enforced attendance at St. James's. Mrs. Percy herself was made nurse to Queen Victoria's father, the little Duke of Kent, which no doubt brought her to Kew; but, in the main, she cannot have seen much of the husband who continued to assure her (by letter) that she was 'the most beautiful and worthiest of women, the most excellent manager, and the friend of the poor and whole human race.'

At Alnwick the duties of Dr. Percy, as we may now call him, for he took his D.D. degree at Cambridge in 1770, were as multifarious as those of Scrub in the 'Beaux' Stratagem.' Besides being chaplain and tutor, he was librarian, secretary, genealogist, political agent, landscape gardener, art-collector, and ballad-maker-general. His functions must often have carried him to London, where, in 1768, he had been made a member of the famous 'Club,' and, though occasionally 'tossed and gored' by Johnson, he appears, on more than one occasion, to have succeeded in being as rude to Johnson as Johnson was rude to him. At the chaplain's table at St. James's he was frequently able to entertain his friends; and his name often occurs in contemporary memoirs as being present at dinners and

Percy and Goldsmith

social gatherings. But through all his activities he still kept his eye on preferment, his enforced separation from his wife and children causing him, in his own words, 'innocently to make use of such human means as prudence suggested for the establishment of himself and his family in a more independent position'—a roundabout utterance which may be roughly translated into working the interest of his Ducal patron for all it was worth. His efforts were crowned with success in 1778, when he became Dean of Carlisle. Of his residence at Carlisle few memories survive, although Johnson was told that he was 'very *populous*'; and its chief event was the death from consumption of his only son Henry, a youth of much charm and promise. Then, in 1782, he was transferred to the see of Dromore in Down—'the smallest independent diocese in Ireland,' but notable from the fact that one of his predecessors had been Jeremy Taylor.

In 1770 he had followed up his early tastes by translating, still anonymously, Mallet's 'Northern Antiquities.' This, to which the poem of the 'Hermit of Warkworth' succeeded in the ensuing year, constitutes his last important literary work, for during the long period of his Irish episcopate, he published nothing but a sermon, and an 'Essay on the Origin of the English Stage, particularly on the Historical Plays of Shakespeare,' 1793. His biographer's pages for this date are pleasantly sprinkled with gossip respecting 'Peep-of-Day-Boys' and 'Defenders,' and the excursions and alarms of French invasion. Through all these things, the Bishop's figure flits fitfully, if not vividly; and the record is varied by visits to Bath, to Brighton, and to London, where, in the last-named year, he sat a silent member of the 'Club' at its first meeting after the execution of Louis XVI., when, out of fifteen, Charles Fox was the only one unmoved. In 1795 his eldest daughter, Barbara, was married to Mr. Isted of Ecton, a delightful Northampton house, to which Percy often retired from distressful Ireland. Six years later a second daughter, Elizabeth, became the wife of the Hon. Pierce Meade, a son of Lord Clanwilliam. At

Eighteenth Century Studies

Dromore, we must imagine the Bishop feeding his swans, gardening *à la* Shenstone, playing with his dogs, or, in the absence of Mrs. Percy, erecting a coloured bust of her in the garden, which by night became an enchanted, or illuminated statue. In 1806 she died; and two years afterwards also died the nephew who had succeeded to his son's place in Percy's affections. By this time the Bishop's eyesight, long failing, had gone altogether, and in a few years more, on 30th September 1811, he passed away suddenly in the eighty-third year of his age. He was buried by the side of his wife under the transept of Dromore Cathedral.

Looking at Sir Joshua's portrait of Thomas Percy, in nightcap, gown, and bands, pressing the famous folio to his breast—a keen, lean, handsome face, reminding one not a little of Richardson's Prior—it is difficult to seize upon any definite traits beyond intelligence and refinement. As to the clerical characteristics suggested by the costume, no very explicit report is forthcoming. There is nothing of parish work in his Northampton cure; nothing of his ministrations as chaplain at Alnwick Castle; nothing at Carlisle but a praiseworthy intervention in the sale of objectionable books; nothing at Dromore but pastoral benevolence and a tolerant spirit, to which we may subjoin from his epitaph, as probably incontrovertible, that he discharged his duties 'with vigilance and zeal, instructing the ignorant, relieving the necessitous, and comforting the distressed'—in short that he was an exemplary specimen of the well-bred and well-to-do Georgian clergyman, with a considerable leaven of the courtier and diplomatist. In his social aspect he seems to have been urbane and accessible; but it is not recorded that he shone as a raconteur or *diseur de bons mots*. Fanny Burney, an acute observer, who met him at Bath in 1791, found him 'perfectly easy and unassuming, very communicative and, though not very entertaining, because too prolix . . . otherwise intelligent and of good commerce.'¹ That he had a

¹ 'Diary and Letters,' 1905, v, 31. Fanny thought Mrs. Percy 'uncultivated and ordinary,' but 'a good creature.'

Percy and Goldsmith

hot temper is admitted; and it is also to be inferred that he was distinctly master in his own house—a fact which helps to explain his adoration of his wife. For the rest, he was a scholar and book-lover, with a fine taste and considerable imitative faculty, added to a special inclination towards genealogy and antiquarian studies. On the whole, what detaches itself most permanently from the review of his ‘highly respectable’ personality, is his compilation of the ‘Reliques’ and his friendship with Goldsmith and Johnson.

As regards Johnson, beyond what has been said, Boswell has told us all that is needful. But Goldsmith’s name reminds us that our attention was first drawn to the new biography of Percy by the hope that it might include fresh particulars concerning his other great contemporary. Nor have we been altogether disappointed, although our first note must be one of dissent. In 1761, as already stated, Percy published his maiden literary effort, the anonymous version, partly by himself and partly by ‘a Mr. Wilkinson,’ of a four-volume Chinese novel, which—after the fashion of those eighteenth-century scholars who took their Greek from Madame Dacier—had been ‘done into English’ from the Portuguese. Forster, writing perhaps less cautiously than usual, thought that Goldsmith’s old interest in the flowery people had been revived by the performance upon which ‘his dignified acquaintance Mr. Percy’ had been engaged. But as three-fourths of Goldsmith’s ‘Chinese Letters’ appeared in the ‘Public Ledger’ in 1760, Miss Gaussen is driven to the conclusion that ‘the idea was suggested to him (Goldsmith)’ by reading Percy’s book in manuscript. He may even have seen it in type, for Shenstone says in September 1761, that it had been ‘printed months ago, but [was] not to be published before winter.’¹ Our point, however, is, that it is quite unnecessary to connect

¹ Nichols’s ‘Illustrations,’ etc., 1848, vii, p. 222. As a matter of fact, ‘Hau Kiou Chooan; or the Pleasing History,’ appeared late in 1761 (‘Gentleman’s Magazine,’ xxxi, 605), after *all* Goldsmith’s Chinese letters had been published in the ‘Public Ledger,’—the last being dated 14th August in that year.

Eighteenth Century Studies

Goldsmith's labours with Percy's in any way. For as early as 14th August 1758, three years before, Goldsmith had written to his friend Bob Bryanton of Ballymulvey, touching Chinese matters in general, and a particular Chinaman whom he should soon make 'talk like an Englishman'; and it is admitted that Goldsmith only met Percy for the first time on 21st February 1759. Dates are stubborn things.

There is, in truth, no reason why 'The Citizen of the World' should have been set in motion by any English predecessor. Goldsmith most probably and reasonably had in mind the 'Lettres Persanes' of Montesquieu. But more than twenty years ago, we ventured to indicate, as a plausible *causa causans* for the 'Chinese Letters,' that sprightly epistle which, in 1757, Horace Walpole published through Graham, 'from Xo Ho [Soho?], a Chinese philosopher at London, to his friend *Lien Chi*, at Peking.' This, which rapidly went through several editions, was noticed very briefly in the 'Monthly Review' for May 1757, at which date, by an odd coincidence, Goldsmith was actually working for its proprietor, Ralph Griffiths; and *Lien Chi* Altangi is one of Goldsmith's Orientals. 'May 1757' has, besides, the advantage of being before, instead of after, August 1758, when Goldsmith wrote to Bob Bryanton. Such things, of course, are but 'trifles at best,'—as Goldsmith said of a later comparison with Percy. Still, whether it be ours or another's, in these hasty biographical days, a false inference cannot be killed too soon; and we decline to believe that Forster really held that Goldsmith owed anything to Percy. On the contrary, in the opening chapter of his second book, Forster distinctly suggests that the major part of Percy's works, 'Reliques' and all, *may* have originated in a remark made by Goldsmith in his very first effort in the 'Monthly Review' for April 1757.

On the next point we must express our gratitude to Miss Gaussen. One of the illustrations of her volume is a rare portrait of Goldsmith. It is not indeed unprocurable, as we ourselves possess a copy. There is at least

Percy and Goldsmith

another in the British Museum; and it occasionally appears in second-hand catalogues. But Miss Gaussen's facsimile is usefully authenticated in Percy's very legible script, as 'a Charicature of Dr. Goldsmith etched by Mr. Bunbury.' To Bunbury it has usually been attributed, but without evidence. It is now plain that this is one of what the 'Jessamy Bride' described to Prior as her brother-in-law's 'caricatures.' There are two other known sketches of Goldsmith by Bunbury, both etched by James Bretherton; and the question remaining to be decided is, which of these constitutes that likeness which the above-mentioned Mrs. Gwyn also referred to as giving Goldsmith's head 'with admirable fidelity, as he actually lived among us.' One, a square plate, shows a stolid, inanimate, and bourgeois face; the other, in the 'Haunch of Venison'—though no doubt grotesquely treated—is, despite its bulbous forehead, long upper lip, and receding chin, instinct with character, vivacity, and eager good-humour. Forster, who knew nothing—or at all events says nothing—about the other sketches, triumphantly contrasts this latter with Sir Joshua's idealized portrait as an instance of 'the distinction between truth and a caricature of it.' But a slight caricature is often more veracious than a flattering likeness; and we cannot help believing that the 'Haunch of Venison' drawing presents the authentic and everyday Goldsmith familiar to his friends. In any case, it is much better known than Bretherton's other etching; and it is given besides on Kearsley's title-page, not as a burlesque, but as a 'head.'

Percy's first meeting with Goldsmith in February 1759 took place at the old Temple Exchange Coffee-house, near Temple Bar, whence, by the way, Goldsmith had written his letter to Bob Bryanton of Ballymulvey. Here they were both guests of Percy's early friend, Dr. James Grainger of the 'Sugar Cane,' Goldsmith's colleague on the 'Monthly Review.' They met again at Dodsley's on the 26th; and in a day or two (3rd March) Percy paid that historical call at 12, Green

Eighteenth Century Studies

Arbour Court, Little Old Bailey, which is in all the biographies. Two years later, on 25th May 1761, Percy visited Goldsmith at 6, Wine Office Court (which by a slip of the pen he calls Wine *Licence* Court); and they afterwards inspected the paintings at the Great Room in Spring Garden, where they must have seen Hogarth's famous 'Sigismunda' and 'Gate of Calais.' Percy is also alleged to have given Goldsmith some material for a magazine he was editing. But it can scarcely have been, as suggested, the 'Monthly Review,' which he never edited, and had long ceased to write in; and it must have been either the 'British' or the 'Lady's Magazine,' with which he was at this date connected. Six days later (31st May) both Percy and Johnson visited Goldsmith together. Here again the meeting is historical; and Percy adds to his memorandum of the incident: 'N.B.—This is the first visit Johnson ever made to Goldy.' It is further stated that during June 1761 Percy frequently saw Goldsmith, 'who was then engaged in writing his "Vicar of Wakefield."' If there is Percy's warranty for this last particular, it is a material confirmation of the conclusion, already arrived at by internal evidence, that Goldsmith's novel was being composed in 1761-2, in the October of which latter year a third share in it was sold to Benjamin Collins, the Salisbury printer.

Miss Gaussen prints two unpublished letters from Goldsmith to the Percys. One, undated, but obviously written in or after 1768, is a simple notelet asking Mrs. Percy for two masquerade tickets, in which his eagerness leads him into grammatical confusion; the other precedes a projected visit to Easton Maudit, Percy's Northampton vicarage, a visit which, most probably, was never paid. They must have offered him the use of a room in their absence, for he asks whether there are any prying, troublesome neighbours; whether there is a coach down, and the fare; whether he can take his books (which looks as if he was engaged on the 'Animated Nature'); whether he can get milk, meat, tea, and coals in the place—and so forth. In 1763-4-5 Percy sees him frequently at Islington

Percy and Goldsmith

and in his first lodgings on the Library Staircase in the Temple. In 1768 Percy is at the first night (29th January) of 'The Good Natur'd Man,' and he was also at the ninth or third author's night. Then a passing estrangement took place between them over the Chatterton forgeries, in which Goldsmith fervently believed.

We get glimpses again of Percy's visiting Goldsmith at Edgware, where he was writing his Natural History, and at his last home in Brick Court. Here, on 21st September 1772, Percy found him very ill in bed, and already resorting to Dr. James's Fever Powders. He was present, in January 1773, when Goldsmith read 'She Stoops to Conquer' to the Club, the play then bearing the name of 'The Old House, a New Inn'; and he subsequently attended not only a rehearsal, but also that famous first night, for an account of which his biographer, we think, relies perhaps too exclusively on the romanced recollections of Richard Cumberland. He went again on the fourth night, having a seat in the Northumberland box. Here are the last of Percy's Goldsmith memoranda:

Thursday, 10th March [1774]. 'Dr. Goldsmith called on me—we dined together at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street: *tête-à-tête*.'

'Monday, 28th March, I called on Dr. Goldsmith whom I found ill of a fever.'

'Sunday, 3rd April, I saw poor Dr. Goldsmith, who was dangerously ill. He just knew me.'

'Monday, 4th April, I went into Sussex. Poor Dr. Goldsmith died this day: having been in convulsions all night. On my return, on Saturday, 9th April, I saw poor Goldsmith's coffin; he was buried that day at five o'clock in the Temple Church.'

In the foregoing brief recapitulation of the relations of Percy and Goldsmith, one incident has been designedly reserved for this place. After Chatterton's death in 1770, Goldsmith 'one rainy day' called on Percy at Northumberland House, and begged him to become his biographer. He dictated to Percy 'many interesting particulars relating to his life,' with dates, and he subse-

Eighteenth Century Studies

quently handed to him several pieces in manuscript 'among a parcel of letters and papers, some written by himself, and some addressed to him, with not much explanation.' What ensued must always be regarded as a painful story of dilatory dealing. For one reason or another, at Goldsmith's death, four years later, Percy had done nothing. Next came a scheme for a Life by Johnson, and an edition of Goldsmith's works. Difficulties however arose concerning the inclusion of 'She Stoops to Conquer.' Johnson, obstructed at the outset, speedily forgot all about the matter; and what was worse, lost many of the papers lent to him by Percy. Malone, who jackalled for him, lost others. Ten years afterwards, under a galvanic impulse of compassion for Goldsmith's starving relatives, Percy hastily issued proposals for an edition of Goldsmith's 'Miscellaneous Writings.' In the leisurely collection of material more time elapsed; but nothing was effected towards the preparation of a biography. Then Dr. Thomas Campbell, rector of Clones in Monaghan, offered his services as editor of what had been brought together. From the spring of 1790 to the autumn of 1791 he was engaged on his task. His outline memoir was then submitted to the Bishop, who decorated it with copious notes, which were afterwards worked into the text by his chaplain, Dr. Henry Boyd, the translator of Dante, who also touched up Campbell's style. This took two more years. In 1795 Campbell died; vexatious disputes arose with the trade as to the exact proportion of the profits which were to go to Goldsmith's representatives; and 1796 arrived 'with everything still unsettled.' By this date Goldsmith had been dead for more than one and twenty years! When at length an unsatisfactory arrangement was made with the booksellers, to whom (in the words of George Steevens), Goldsmith's works had all along been 'staple commodities,' and a new editor had been appointed in the person of Cowper's friend, Samuel Rose, fresh complications took place. Finally Percy, who now discovered that he 'had particular reasons for not being himself Goldsmith's *ostensible*

Percy and Goldsmith

biographer,' withdrew altogether from the scheme; and in 1801 the much-manipulated 'Memoir' was issued, without his concurrence, at the head of four volumes of Goldsmith's 'Miscellaneous Works.' The gain to Goldsmith's relatives, few of whom were then alive, proved not only belated, but contemptible.

That Percy and Johnson should have so mismanaged and neglected a labour of love which either could have performed with special advantages, is deplorable. But there are compensations. We can scarcely regret the circumstances which prompted the conscientious labours of Prior and Forster, and attracted the kindred pen of Washington Irving. To-day we probably know a great deal more of Oliver Goldsmith than was ever known to the editor of the 'Reliques' or the author of 'Rasselas.'

MR. CRADOCK OF GUMLEY

‘ DÉLASSONS-NOUS un peu à parler de M. de Pontmartin,’ says Sainte-Beuve, at the outset of a causerie. Not that there is any connection between M. de Pontmartin and the subject of this paper; nor—let us hasten to add—between its writer and the keenest and finest of French literary critics. But ‘ Mr. Cradock of Gumley ’ has been continually turning up of late—in Boswell, in Forster’s ‘ Goldsmith,’ in Miss Gaussen’s ‘ Percy,’ with an air that indirectly invites recognition; and to ‘ relax oneself a little ’ seems the proper spirit in which to approach an individuality more curious than instructive—more amiable than illustrious. For Cradock, it must be confessed, was not a person of supreme distinction in letters. To have adapted a tragedy by Voltaire, which Voltaire himself came to stigmatize as ‘ un ouvrage fort médiocre ’; to have written an ‘ epistolary novel ’ on the lines of the ‘ Vicar of Wakefield,’ with digressions about landscape gardening; and to have compassed sundry prologues, epilogues and occasional verses, none very remarkable:—these things are scarcely qualifications for a trip in Goldsmith’s ‘ Fame Machine,’ even though it should be added that their author, in his eighty-third year, published ‘ with a most flattering reception ’ a five-act historical play ‘ on the subject of the Czar.’ But if he was not the rose, he had lived in her vicinity. A country gentleman of good fortune and a local magnate; liberally educated; of cultivated tastes; a musician, a clever amateur actor, and a traveller in France before the Revolution, Cradock also took a keen interest in the notabilities of his day. He knew Johnson and most of his circle; he was well acquainted with Garrick and Foote—with Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Cibber; he had mixed with

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

people as different from each other as Bishop Hurd and 'Jemmy Twitcher'—as Otaheitan Omai and Laurence Shirley, Earl Ferrers. Concerning not a few of these he has left anecdotes in his 'Memoirs,' anecdotes which have found a permanent place in several authoritative biographies. It is therefore a permissible, and even a pardonable *délassement* to linger for a moment among the very miscellaneous recollections of 'Mr. Cradock of Gumley.'

His 'Memoirs,' which were printed in 1826-8, make four volumes, two published in his lifetime, two posthumous. The first, which is autobiographical, and the last, which supplements and illustrates the first, are the most interesting, the intermediate numbers being mainly occupied by his works and travels.¹ He was born on 9th January 1742, at Leicester, and went to the grammar school there. He lost his mother early; and when he was about seventeen, his father also died, leaving him ample means. As a boy he had been taken in his holidays to Bath and other places, where he had already developed a native taste for the stage; and in a later visit to Scarborough during his minority, he made the acquaintance of Sterne and the Cibbers. Then, as a preliminary to the University, he was placed at Mackworth in Derby with a private tutor, who was secretly a red-hot Jacobite. Soon after the Coronation of George III (22nd September 1761), of which he was a spectator, he went into residence at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. His turn was for declamation (or 'spouting' as it was called) rather than mathematics; and he had little hope of his bachelor's degree when he left the University for London, where, in 1765, he was married at St. George's, Bloomsbury, to Miss Anna Francesca Stratford, a young lady of Warwickshire, at that time resident with her grandmother in Great Ormond Street. This event was almost immedi-

¹ A fuller edition in four volumes, with a Memoir by one of Cradock's executors, John Bowyer Nichols, the printer and antiquary, was issued in 1828. By the kindness of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, we have been favoured with a copy of this, to which many MSS., illustrations, etc., have been added.

Eighteenth Century Studies

ately succeeded by the gift from the Duke of Newcastle, Chancellor of the University, of a Royal Degree of Master of Arts. Cradock's town residence was in Dean Street, Soho, an accident which later procured him, *in absentia*, the further distinction of having his windows broken by the mob in consequence of his neglect to illuminate on Wilkes's birthday (17th October).¹ For this expensive privilege, which piled his drawing-room with broken glass and cobble-stones, he consoled himself by composing a brief biography of the popular demagogue 'in the manner of Plutarch'—a *jeu d'esprit* which was promptly communicated to the Duke of Grafton, and (we are informed mysteriously) was 'not ungraciously received in a higher quarter.'

A disregard for dates is the natural corollary to a dislike for mathematics. When Cradock went to live in Dean Street, we are not told; but he must have been some years in London in 1773, when a second edition of the Wilkes pamphlet was published. During this period he was no doubt assiduously cultivating his taste for music and the drama; assembling what ultimately grew into a splendid library, and improving his Leicestershire property. He tells us that after the above occurrence, he surrendered the lease of his town house, though but for the date 1773, we should have no inkling when. We hear vaguely of his being Sheriff of Leicester; of his organizing musical performances as steward of Leicester Infirmary; and he was also Deputy Lieutenant for the county. In these circumstances, it will be most convenient to set down at once the leading events of his life subsequent to his marriage, and afterwards to group under their respective classes a selection from the more interesting of his records. In 1768 he became an F.S.A.; and in 1769 took part in the Stratford Jubilee. 'Zobeide,' his Voltaire tragedy, was produced in 1771; his Richardson-cum-

¹ These were apparently not 'birthday honours' alone. 'Here were . . . most of the windows in town broke, that had no lights for *Wilkes and Liberty*, who were thought to be inseparable' (Chesterfield's 'Letters,' 1774, ii, 529, under date of 12th April 1768).

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

Goldsmith novelette, 'Village Memoirs,' in 1774. He travelled in North Wales in 1776-7; in 1783-6, in France and Holland. His wife died in 1816. In 1821 he published 'Fidelia; or, The Prevalence of Fashion,' another tale against duelling and gaming. Two years later his estate having become encumbered, and his means being reduced to a moderate annuity, he settled in London, where, after printing 'The Czar,' and preparing the first two volumes of his 'Memoirs' for the press, he died on 15th December 1826, in his eighty-fifth year, and was buried in the vault of St. Mary-le-Strand, near which he had spent his latter days.

Mr. Cradock's bias, even as a boy, had been stagewards, and with his theatrical reminiscences we may begin. Of some of the older luminaries, however, he could say no more than *vidi tantum*. Quin, for example, he had met once or twice at Bath in company with that actor's close ally, the parodist Hawkins Browne. But Quin, who died in 1766, the year after Cradock's marriage, had then long retired from the stage; and was subsisting in the Queen of the West chiefly upon his social qualities. In 1766, too, died another member of the old régime, Mrs. Cibber. Cradock greatly appreciated this actress, whom Garrick reckoned the rightful queen of tragedy, and he adds his testimony to her supremacy. 'She was charming in every part she undertook,' he says; 'but she appeared to be identified with the melancholy fair Ophelia'—a sentiment which after her death he enforced in verse. He seems also to have known her accomplished and eccentric brother, Dr. Arne, of whose catch, 'Buzz, quoth the Blue Fly,' he was an ardent admirer. Mrs. Clive, who, in 1769, like the lady in the 'Bab Ballads' 'grew bulky, and quitted the stage,' he mentions, but cannot have known intimately. His chief acquaintances, on coming to town, were the members of the Theatrical Club which then met at Wright's Coffee House, in York Street, Covent Garden. Among these he speaks of Charles Holland, whom Churchill called 'Garrick at second hand,' and William Powell, who, but for his premature death,

Eighteenth Century Studies

promised really to rival the same great man. Closer, however, for a time than with either of these were his relations with Samuel Foote, soon to be manager of the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, once memorable for the satiric successes of Fielding. Cradock claims to have called the attention of Foote to a story in the 'Diable Boiteux' of Lesage 'as a good subject for stage buffoonery.' Foote at first ridiculed Lesage and the suggestion; but subsequently remembered both in one of his most popular and most lucrative efforts, 'The Devil upon Two Sticks.' Cradock, in some sort, may be said to have returned the compliment, since he makes the maleficent influence in his 'Village Memoirs' one of those Indian parvenus whom Foote presently pilloried so successfully in the comedy of 'The Nabob.'

Not very many months before the appearance of 'The Nabob,' Cradock himself, by the good offices of Mrs. Yates, had made his *début* as a dramatist. In 1767, Voltaire, then a septuagenarian, had produced, in his little private theatre at Ferney, a five-act tragedy called 'Les Scythes,' which he had written very rapidly, and acted in himself.¹ It was no great success, for his powers were manifestly declining; and he was wise enough not to attempt to re-model it. When he printed it, however, he spoke of it in his 'Preface' as a sketch which some younger man might work up. Cradock, into whose hands it came, undertook this venture. He translated it; altered it considerably throughout, especially in the fourth and fifth acts, and changed the title to 'Zobeide'—Voltaire's heroine being Obeide. He showed it to Mrs. Yates, who expressed a desire to undertake the leading female character. Thereupon the flattered and politic author promptly offered her the piece for her benefit, with the result that it was brought out at Covent

¹ Gibbon has described Voltaire's acting four years earlier. He thought him 'a very ranting unnatural performer'; but adds, 'Perhaps I was too much struck with the ridiculous figure of Voltaire at seventy, acting a Tartar Conqueror with a hollow broken voice, and making love to a very ugly niece of about fifty.' ('Corr.', 1896, i, 43.)

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

Garden in the December of 1771. It was acted thirteen nights, which may be regarded as a success—at all events *d'estime*. To analyse the plot—or, as Arthur Murphy put it in his Epilogue—to

Ramble with Voltaire to Eastern climes,
To Seythian laws and antiquated times,

is needless. The Prologue was supplied by Goldsmith, who took care to accentuate the fact that the author was no 'mercenary trader.' But the crown of Cradock's satisfaction must have been the acknowledgment which reached him, two years later, from the only begetter of the piece, to whom he sent a printed copy:

9^e 8bre 1773, à ferney.

Sr

Thanks to y^r muse a foreign copper shines
Turn'd in to gold, and coin'd in sterling lines.

You have done to much honour to an old sick man of eighty.
I am with the most sincere esteem and gratitude,

S^r y^r obdt Serv^t Voltaire.

Cradock should have known Mrs. Yates pretty well, for he speaks of having, at Lady Rochford's, acted Jaffier to her Belvidera in 'Venice Preserv'd.' With the exception of the aforementioned 'Czar,' 'Zobeide' seems to have been his solitary essay as a playwright. 'Zobeide,' however, brings us back again to Foote, in whose 'Piety in Pattens' both Mrs. Yates and Cradock were burlesqued. As the libretto of Foote's 'primitive puppet-show' was never printed, it is difficult to say exactly in what the oral burlesque consisted, though, according to Cradock, it found no favour with the audience. Yet regarded as a happy contribution to the campaign against Sentimental Comedy, that 'mawkish drab of spurious breed,'¹ imported from France, whom Kelly and Cumberland had

¹ Not many weeks before, Goldsmith had defined sentimental comedy as 'a kind of *mulish* production, with all the defects of its opposite parents, and marked with sterility.' Like others of his good things, this seems to be no more than a neat resetting of an earlier dictum. Voltaire (Preface to 'Nanine') calls Romanesque comedy '*une espèce batarde . . . née de l'impuissance de faire une comédie et une tragedie veritable*' (16 June 1749).

Eighteenth Century Studies

made popular, and Goldsmith had combated in the 'Good-Natur'd Man,' Foote's entertainment deserves to be remembered. Modelled on the popular Panton Street marionettes, it was acted entirely by wooden puppets—'not much larger than Garrick,' Foote maliciously told an inquisitive lady of quality; and it purported to exhibit the fortunes of a 'handsome housemaid,' a combination of Pamela and Mrs. Yates, 'who, by the mere effects of morality and virtue, raised herself to riches and honours.' Foote emphasized his attack on the reigning 'moral essay in dialogue' by a humorous preliminary address in which he made his purpose clear; and this has fortunately been preserved. After sketching the origin and progress of puppet shows, he wound up by saying that the audience would not discover much wit and humour in his new piece, since 'his brother authors had all agreed that it was highly improper, and beneath the dignity of a mixed assembly, to show any signs of joyful satisfaction; and that creating a laugh was forcing the higher order of an audience to a vulgar and mean use of their muscles'—for which reason, he explained, he had, like them, given up the sensual for the sentimental style. The first representation of the 'primitive puppet show' took place on 15th February, just a month before Goldsmith's 'She Stoops to Conquer' came out at Covent Garden; and to Foote therefore belongs the credit of having effectively 'scotched' the sentimental snake, upon which Goldsmith and Sheridan were to do further, if not final, execution. According to Cradock, both Goldsmith and Johnson were earmarked for burlesque in Foote's entertainment; but a timely announcement by the 'Leviathan of Literature' in Tom Davies's back parlour touching his fixed intention to provide himself with a retributive big stick, effectually averted the proposed indignity. To Cradock Foote made some doubtful apology; but either by accident or design, they met no more.

With Garrick—who, by the way, did not wholly escape the lash of the English Aristophanes—Cradock was fairly

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

familiar. He was introduced to him as early as 1761, when he was acting, or preparing to act, the part of Oakly, the husband in Colman's 'Jealous Wife,' a play which, borrowing some details from Fielding, deserves the credit of partially anticipating 'The Clandestine Marriage' in its attempt to retain those old comic constituents of comedy which the sentimental craze was thrusting into the background. On the strength of this introduction, Cradock, a year or two later, persuaded Garrick and his wife to visit him at Gumley, on which occasion he offered up a pair of ancestral carp to his distinguished guests. When, in 1766, 'The Clandestine Marriage' was produced, the part of Lord Ogleby, which Garrick affirmed he had taken from a Norfolk original, was—as is well known—admirably presented by that prince of stage old men, Thomas King. Garrick, nevertheless, while doing full justice to King's reading, protested privately that it was not *his* (i.e., the author's) Lord Ogleby; and proposed that the play should be acted in the provinces, when Cradock, who somewhat resembled him in face and figure, and of whose histrionic abilities he had satisfied himself, was to double ¹ the character of the pert valet Brush with that of Sir John Melvil, while he (Roscius, to wit) gave the true copy of the superannuated beau. The comedy was to alternate with a tragedy, 'Hamlet,' in which Cradock was to assume the title-rôle, and Garrick was to take the Ghost, as he had done for Holland's benefit. All this, for obscure reasons, came to naught. But Cradock's contemplated functions in the scheme certainly justify his recording (in capitals) that 'Garrick spoke with great satisfaction of my acting,' which—it should perhaps be

¹ In another part of his record, Cradock says he was to take *three* characters, and the place of acting was to be the first Lord Holland's 'Formian Villa' at Kingsgate in Kent. This was the structure which gave rise to the (for Gray) ferocious impromptu, beginning:

'Old, and abandoned by each venal friend,
Here Holland formed the pious resolution
To smuggle a few years, and strive to mend
A broken character and constitution.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

added—was, like Holland's and Powell's, closely imitated from Garrick's own. 'From frequently reading with, and attending Garrick (says Cradock), I became a very exact *copyist*'; and he goes on to say that another frustrate scheme was that, in honour of Garrick and Johnson, he should play Archer in the 'Beaux' Stratagem' at Lichfield, where the scene of the comedy is laid. This—according to Cradock—was the historic occasion on which Goldsmith expressed a desire to act the part of Scrub.

Cradock, as we have said, attended the Stratford Jubilee in 1769, when, in the guise of Garter King-at-Arms, he had the honour of dancing a minuet with Mrs. Garrick. He was also present at some of Garrick's farewell performances—e.g., of 'Lear' and of 'Richard III.' The actor's health was then failing, and his physical infirmities made the latter assumption especially trying. 'I dread the fight and the fall,' he said. 'I am afterwards in agonies.' But he had 'gained his fame by Richard,' and was determined 'to end with it.' Nevertheless, though he astonished King George by the activity with which he ran about the field, he was eventually obliged to make his adieux in the less arduous part of Don Felix in 'The Wonder.' This Cradock did not see. Cradock tells a good many other anecdotes of Garrick, but we can only find room for one, which, besides being characteristic of an amiable weakness, is also less known than some of the rest. Once, when Cradock was a guest at St. James's Coffee-house—it was on the memorable occasion when Johnson, retorting to Burke's unwelcome comment on his appetite, said, 'There is a time of life, Sir, when a man requires the repairs of a table'—Garrick arrived very late. He 'came in, full dressed, made many apologies for being so much later than he intended, but he had been unexpectedly detained at the House of Lords, and Lord Camden had absolutely insisted upon setting him down at the door of the hotel in his own carriage. Johnson said nothing, but he looked a volume.'

A passage in Boswell effectively supports this little story, both as regards Garrick's relations to Camden, and

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

Johnson's attitude to each. Garrick had invited Boswell to breakfast, and on his arrival said to him: 'Pray now, did you—did you meet a little lawyer turning the corner, eh?' 'No, Sir' (said Boswell). 'Pray what do you mean by the question?' 'Why' (replied Garrick, with affected indifference, 'yet as if standing on tiptoe'), 'Lord Camden has this moment left me. We have had a long walk together.' Boswell, of course, hastened to retail this to Johnson, whose remorseless comment was: 'Well, Sir, Garrick talked very properly. Lord Camden *was a little lawyer* to be associating so familiarly with a player.' Camden and Garrick were, however, genuinely attached to one another; and when Garrick was nearing his last days, the Lord Chancellor wrote warmly of their long connection, and of his continued regard for his theatrical friend.

Tried by the rigid chronological tests of Dr. Birkbeck Hill, Cradock's octogenarian recollections do not always emerge victoriously. One story of Percy's preaching a charity sermon, based on the fourth of Johnson's 'Idlers,' and then sending Cradock to Johnson to explain matters, is certainly discredited if, according to Dr. Hill, the sermon was preached seven years before Cradock first met Johnson at all. As to that first meeting, we have fortunately the corroborative testimony of Boswell, who gives us what Cradock does not, the precise date—12th April 1776. Like Boswell's own first interview, it took place at Davies the bookseller's in Russell Street, and Boswell was present. Cradock had been thoughtfully forewarned of Johnson's peculiarities, and particularly cautioned not to commit the heinous error of quitting the dinner-table prematurely for the play. The talk ran upon tragedy and Aristotle. Johnson was unusually brilliant—so brilliant that (we learn from Boswell) Cradock whispered to his neighbour, 'O that his words were written in a book!' But, under opposition, he began to 'rear' and wax 'loud,' until Cradock judiciously saved the situation by taking a deferential tone, as a consequence of which he had the satisfaction of being assured in a whisper, either by Davies

Eighteenth Century Studies

or Boswell, that he was safely 'landed' in the Doctor's good graces.

Fortunately, many of Cradock's anecdotes are not affected by the time-touchstone, and being besides in agreement with Johnson's known habit of mind, are less open to suspicion. The great man's barbarous treatment of books, for example, is no controverted thing. Once Cradock, going to Bolt Court with Percy, found him 'rolling upon the floor,' surrounded by volumes, which had just been brought to him—an incident which suggests the ardour of the student rather than the reverence of the bibliophile. On this occasion he was absorbed by 'a Runic bible,' which must also have interested Percy. Readers of Mme. D'Arblay will recall how speedily Garrick's priceless 'Petrarca' pounced over the Doctor's head during a fit of abstraction; and another story here relates to some works perhaps equally dear to their possessor. Calling once on Garrick in Southampton Street, Johnson strayed by mischance into a private cabinet adjoining the study, which was filled with elegantly-clad presentation copies of novels and light literature. He 'read first a bit of one, then another, and threw all down; so that before the host arrived, the floor was strewn with splendid octavos.' Garrick, as may be guessed, was 'exceedingly angry'; but Johnson, always pitiless to the petty side of his old pupil, only said magisterially: 'I was determined to examine some of your valuables, which I find consist of three sorts—*stuff, trash, and nonsense.*' In his old age, from ill-health and the growing habit of procrastination, it became hazardous to entrust him with anything rare or valuable. This was the case with a volume of MSS., 'magnificently bound,' which contained poems by James I, and of which Cradock had procured the loan from Lord Harborough. Writing about the book shortly afterwards, he was dismayed to find that Johnson had no recollection of receiving it. But George Steevens, whom Cradock nervously consulted (and who rated him soundly for lending it), suggested that it might be lying *perdu* in a mysterious sealed packet then, to his

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

knowledge, under Johnson's inkstand. And so, indeed, it proved. When Johnson died, Cradock promptly applied to the executors; and the precious consignment was forthwith discovered, unopened, exactly where Steevens had detected it two years earlier.

At Johnson's death, Cradock was on the Continent, as he wrote from Marseilles. When starting on his travels in October 1783, he had taken leave of his old friend, who was visibly touched. 'I wish I could accompany you,' he had said, 'for I dread the effects of this climate during the ensuing winter.' Cradock had always found him civil; and 'had derived from him numerous advantages.' 'Of all men I ever knew'—he says elsewhere—'Dr. Johnson was the most instructive.' But he can only have known him in the later years of his life, if he first made his acquaintance at Davies' in 1776.

There are but two more references to Johnson that need be borrowed from Cradock's budget. Johnson, it will be remembered, writing to Langton of Percy's 'Hermit of Warkworth' in March 1771, had faintly commended it as 'pretty enough.' This could not, however, prevent him from mimicking its adoption of the ballad manner, made popular by the 'Reliques':

I put my hat upon my head,
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man,
With his hat in his hand.

'Modern imitations of ancient ballads,' says Boswell, always roused his ridicule; but that this quatrain was directly prompted by Percy is clear from a letter of Garrick to Cradock, asking him whether he had seen Johnson's criticism on the 'Hermit.' 'It is already over half the town'—adds this irrepressible scandal-monger. Another Cradock anecdote is preserved, not indeed by Cradock himself, but in a note of his friend Nichols. Once Cradock and George Steevens accompanied Johnson to Marybone Gardens where they saw 'La Serva Padrona' ('The Maid Mistress'), a popular musical entertainment translated

Eighteenth Century Studies

from the Italian of Paisiello by Storace. Steevens thought the scheme—an old fellow cheated and deluded by his servant—‘quite foolish and unnatural.’ Johnson instantly replied, ‘Sir, it is *not unnatural*, it is a scene that is acted in my family every day of my life.’ His hearers understood him to refer, not so much to the despotic heroine of the burletta, as to the perpetual wrangling of his two housekeepers and pensioners at Bolt Court—his rival Roxana and Statira, as he grimly styled them after Nat. Lee’s termagants—Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins. ‘To-day Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins had a scold’—he tells Mrs. Thrale in October 1778—‘Williams was going away, but I bid her *not turn tail*, and she came back and rather got the upper hand.’

During his connection with Johnson, Cradock could never have known Goldsmith, since Goldsmith died before that connection began. And he knew Goldsmith for even a shorter time than Johnson. But Cradock was only twelve years junior to the author of the ‘Deserted Village’; and their relations were probably more unconstrained. Most of Cradock’s anecdotes have been adopted by Goldsmith’s biographers. It is from Cradock that we get the oft-cited lament: ‘While you are nibbling about elegant phrases, I am obliged to write half a volume’; the complacent: ‘As to my “Hermit” that poem, Cradock, cannot be amended’; and, above all, the delightful proposition for improving Gray’s ‘Elegy’ by putting out ‘an idle word in every line.’ As thus:

The curfew tolls the knell of day,
The lowing herd winds o’er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his way,—

and so forth. In an excellent article in the ‘Edinburgh Review,’¹ Lord Lytton ingeniously exploded this piece of profanation by shearing down Shakespeare’s ‘gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day,’ on the same principle, to a bare ‘the day.’ What is oddest—perhaps one should add, most human—about Goldsmith’s criticism is, that

¹ Vol. 88 (1848), p. 205.

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

his own 'Hermit' above-mentioned is itself by no means exempt from those decorative superfluities which—to distinguish them from more inevitable adjuncts—are usually known as 'gradus' epithets. It is Cradock also who is responsible for what, if not the only, is perhaps the most unvarnished statement about Goldsmith's unhappy tendency to gaming. 'The greatest fault of Dr. Goldsmith,' he says, 'was, that if he had thirty pounds in his pocket, he would go into certain companies in the country, and in hopes of doubling the sum, would generally return to town without any part of it.'

Whether Cradock first made Goldsmith's acquaintance through the Yates's, or through Goldsmith's friend, Lord Clare of the 'Haunch of Venison,' we know not. But the acquaintance seems to have been cemented, if not commenced, by the prologue to 'Zobeide,' which was originally written for Yates, and was sent to Lord Clare's Essex seat of Gosfield Hall, where Cradock was staying. A few weeks later, we find Goldsmith and Cradock collaborating upon another work which may perhaps owe its origin to Lord Clare, the 'Threnodia Augustalis' in memory of his lordship's 'old political mistress and patron,' the widow of Frederick, Prince of Wales. Cradock apparently rendered Goldsmith some vague services in the musical adaptation of this very occasional performance, which Chalmers first reprinted in 1810 from a copy given by its author to Cradock. Cradock also claims to have 'altered' 'She Stoops to Conquer'—a pretension which must be taken with a qualifying grain of salt. But he undoubtedly saw it before it was in type, for in returning it to the author he subjoined 'a ludicrous address to the Town by Tony Lumpkin,' which—much abridged—Goldsmith added to the printed play with the note, 'This came too late to be Spoken.' Cradock, however, describes it as a mere *jeu d'esprit*, not intended for the public. Whether Goldsmith ever actually visited Cradock in his Leicester home is uncertain. He undoubtedly proposed to do so. 'I am determined,' he said, 'to come down into the country, and make some stay with you, and I will build you

Eighteenth Century Studies

an ice-house.' To the visit, Cradock readily assented; but met the rest of the suggestion by a polite circumlocution.

Upon another occasion Cradock relates how Goldsmith, unwilling to return prematurely from Windsor, enlisted his services and those of Percy to correct some proofs for 'Animated Nature.' Neither of them knew anything of birds, Percy declaring that he could scarce tell a goose from a swan; but they managed to accomplish their task respectably. Cradock's most interesting memories, however, refer to a period not long before Goldsmith's death, when his health was broken, and his growing embarrassments were preying on his spirits. Already, as we learn from Percy, Goldsmith had been ill in September 1772. In the autumn of the year following, Cradock came to London, and saw him frequently in the mornings. He found him much changed, 'and at times very low.' He endeavoured to induce him to publish 'The Traveller' and 'The Deserted Village' by subscription, with notes—the object being to obtain some immediate and much needed monetary relief for the author—a proposition which, he says, Goldsmith rather suffered than encouraged. Goldsmith showed him at this time the now lost prospectus of his projected 'Dictionary of Arts and Sciences,' an effort which he himself regarded as belonging to his best work, and which, if we may believe Cradock, must have been characterized by all the 'inspired common-sense' which distinguishes the 'Preface' to the 'Survey of Experimental Philosophy.' The day before Cradock left town, Goldsmith dined with him in his Norfolk Street lodging; but took little of the 'neat repast' which had been sent in from the famous 'Crown and Anchor' in the Strand. 'He endeavoured to talk and remark, as usual, but all was force.' When they parted at midnight by the Temple Gate it was for the last time, for Goldsmith's death was not far off. But with the Temple is connected the only other Goldsmith anecdote we shall reproduce from his Leicestershire friend. There were two poor Miss Gunns, sisters and milliners, at the corner of Temple Lane, who had the

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

strongest confidence in their Brick Court customer. 'O Sir!' — they told Cradock 'most feelingly' — 'sooner persuade him to let us work for him, gratis, than suffer him to apply to any other; we are sure that he will pay us if he can.' Well might Johnson exclaim: 'Was ever poet so trusted before!'

The Goldsmith and Johnson stories form the bulk of Cradock's literary recollections, and his references to other contemporary writers are few and unimportant. Sterne, it has been said, he had met as a boy at Scarborough. But in London he could have seen little of him, for Sterne died in 1768, and is only once mentioned again. 'He never possessed any equal spirits,' writes Cradock of Yorick, 'he was always either in the cellar or the garret.' Knowing that Garrick had a real regard for him, Cradock said to him at Drury Lane Theatre that he was surprised he had not undertaken to write a Comedy. Sterne 'seemed quite struck, and after a pause, with tears in his eyes, replied, "I fear I do not possess the proper talent for it, and I am utterly unacquainted with the business of the stage."' As Cradock adds that, at this time, Sterne was in difficulties, we may assume the date to have been 1766, when he had not yet recruited his fortunes with the last volume of 'Tristram Shandy,' and the publication, by subscription, of a fresh instalment of his sermons. Apropos of 'Tristram,' Cradock tells the following, which he says he told to Sterne. A gentleman, asking for an amusing book, was recommended to try the philological 'Hermes' of Fielding's friend, James Harris of Salisbury. Conceiving it to be a novel, he could make no more of it than the old lady who found the story in Johnson's 'Dictionary' disconnected: and he returned it with the cold comment that he thought 'all these imitations of "Tristram Shandy" fell short of the original!'

The mention of Fielding reminds us that Cradock contributes yet one more item to the 'Tom Jones' legend. Fielding, he tells us, was intimate with the Boothbys of Tooley Park, in Leicestershire; 'and it is supposed that more than one character in his excellent novel of "Tom

Eighteenth Century Studies

Jones " was drawn from thence.' After this, we are not surprised to hear that the beauty of this family, Mrs. Boothby, was the model for Sophia Western, a suggestion which shows that the book must already have been more talked about than read, since Fielding's heroine, upon his own showing, was his first wife.¹ Of Gibbon, Cradock says nothing worth repeating; and of Gray little beyond the fact that he (Cradock) was present when Gray's last poetical composition, the Ode written for the installation of the Duke of Grafton (Augustus Henry Fitzroy) as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge—an effort which was Gray's spontaneous return to the Duke for making him Professor of Modern History—was performed in the Senate House. Cradock adds that he gave a number of anecdotes of Gray to Johnson for his 'Lives of the Poets.' Unhappily, the Doctor was tired of his task; and like other contributions of the kind, they were either neglected or lost.

But Cradock on Literature and the Drama alone has exhausted our space; and we must pass over Hackman and Miss Ray, Lord Sandwich and Her Grace of Kingston, Bishop Hurd and Dr. Parr, with half a dozen other notorieties we had remarked for comment. The 'Travels,' again, deserve more than casual mention, since the most cursory inspection reveals seductive references to Cagliostro and the 'Diamond Necklace,'² Beaumarchais and the 'Mariage de Figaro,' Choiseul, Lauzun, Buffon, galley-slaves, improvisatori, scaramouches and a host of subjects equally delectable. We have, however, sufficiently fulfilled our purpose, which was mainly to direct attention

¹ These relations of Fielding with the Boothbys gain a certain piquancy from the fact that, in some *post*-Richardsonian editions of 'Pamela,' some one has ingeniously filled in 'Mr. B's' name on several occasions as 'Mr. Boothby.' Fielding, it will be remembered, had completed it in 'Joseph Andrews' as 'Mr. Booby.'

² As we left Paris for Flanders and Holland, the disconsolate Cardinal [de Rohan] was pointed out to us, as an object of the last despair, leaning over the battlements of the ever-to-be-abhorred Bastille.' ('Memoirs,' 1826, ii, 282.) Louis-René, Prince de Rohan, was a leading actor in the 'Affaire du Collier.'

Mr. Cradock of Gumley

to a record now well-nigh forgotten. Had Cradock written it at fifty instead of eighty, he might perhaps have escaped the charges of confusion and inaccuracy which Forster (who nevertheless uses his material) lays at his door. But his Memoirs, even as they stand, are probably as trustworthy as many more pretentious chronicles.

LYTTELTON AS MAN OF LETTERS

READERS who are accustomed to the milder methods of modern criticism would be interested to consult the 'Quarterly Review' for 1847 on the 'Memoirs and Correspondence of George, Lord Lyttelton,' Macaulay, it may be remembered, was in the habit of robustiously 'dusting the jackets' of some of those who were submitted to his régime in the 'Edinburgh.' But the fashion of his rival in the buff organ—it was, of course, the redoubtable and Right Honourable John Wilson Croker—wellnigh warrants the employment of a more ferocious transatlantic figure. He 'just wipes the floor' with his unfortunate victim, whose minutest errors seem to have been inspected through a magnifier of what Sam Weller calls 'hextra power.' 'Loose and incoherent style,' 'blunder, ignorance, misstatement, and bad taste,' 'slovenly piece of biography,' 'most imbecile and bungling of compilations'—these are some of the flowers of speech which the terrible 'Rigby' scatters *benigno cornu*. Whether the 'Memoirs' suffered materially from this barbarous usage, we know not. But there are no traces of a second edition in the British Museum Catalogue; and as the book not only contains much valuable material but apparently constitutes the only life of Lyttelton, it may be pardonable to revert to its subject. Perhaps it would be more exact to say a part of its subject, since Lyttelton, as a political figure, would now be difficult to revive. It is true that he was the sometime favourite of Frederick, Prince of Wales; the friend and connection of the elder Pitt; the 'declared enemy' of Sir Robert Walpole. But he was neither an eminent speaker nor a great administrator (as

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

Chancellor of the Exchequer he was admittedly over-parted): and when, at seven-and-forty, he 'rested'—as Johnson says—'from political turbulence in the House of Lords,' he had added no memorable name to the annals of English statecraft. Luckily—in Johnson's words once more—'politicks did not so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance.' He wrote 'Persian Letters' (after Montesquieu); he wrote 'Dialogues of the Dead' (after Lucian); both of which found an honourable place in Harrison's 'British Classicks.' He wrote a compact and closely-reasoned pamphlet on the 'Conversion of St. Paul'; he wrote an extraordinarily conscientious and laborious 'History of Henry II.' He also composed a sufficient number of minor poems to secure his admission to those wonderful 'Lives of the Poets' which tolerated Stepney and Fenton while they gave grudging praise to Milton and Gray. He was the patron and friend of Fielding and Thomson; he was 'ironed' by Chesterfield, and he was libelled by Smollett. These things—it is submitted—are distinctions which should serve to justify some passing inquiry into his personality as a man of letters.

The eldest of the six sons of Sir Thomas Lyttelton, Bart., of Hagley, in Worcestershire, he was born on 17th January 1709, his mother being a sister of Sir Richard Temple of Stowe, afterwards Pope's Lord Cobham. He was educated at Eton, where he was an oppidan, which means that the books contain no records of him. But as we now know his contemporary Fielding was there in 1721-2, it is probable that, being somewhat younger, he began to attend about this date. Other of his contemporaries were William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, whose elder brother, Thomas Pitt of Boconnoc, eventually married Lyttelton's sister; Charles Hanbury, later Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and Henry Fox, first Lord Holland. Gilbert West, Lyttelton's cousin, had probably quitted Eton before Lyttelton arrived there, as West matriculated at Christ Church in 1722. According to Johnson, Lyttelton was early distinguished for ability, so much so that

Eighteenth Century Studies

his exercises were 'recommended as models to his school-fellows.' He is also stated to have sketched, if not elaborated, at Eton some of his best verses, the 'Soliloquy of a Beauty in the Country,' which certainly exhibits unusual precocity for a lad of seventeen, his age when he went up to Oxford. It has obvious affinities with Pope's earlier epistle to Teresa Blount on leaving Town. 'Ah, what avails it,' sighs the heroine, 'to be young and fair: To move with negligence, to dress with care?'

With every grace of nature or of art,
We cannot break one stubborn country heart;
The brutes, insensible, our powers defy:
To love, exceeds a 'squire's capacity.

She is evidently terribly bored:

In stupid indolence my life is spent,
Supinely calm, and dully innocent:
Unblest I wear my useless time away;
Sleep (wretched maid!) all night, and dream all day;
Now with mamma at tedious whist I play;
Now without scandal drink insipid tea;
Or in the garden breathe the country air,
Secure from meeting any tempter there!

all of which unmistakably indicates what has been felicitously called the 'intolerable ennui of a waveless calm'; and from one of the author's later letters to his father, perhaps not inaccurately reproduces some of the domestic routine of Hagley. But though headed in his works 'Written at Eaton School,' the verses were not printed till long afterwards, and were doubtless revised in the interval.

Lyttelton matriculated at Christ Church in February 1726. There is no record of his university life; and he left Oxford in a couple of years, without taking a degree. It is possible that many of his poems belong to this procreant time; but the only published piece, 'Blenheim,' that is, the palace not the battle, appeared in 1728. Its Miltonic blank verse has no particular merit, and it neither rivals Addison nor Philips. But it pleased the 'terrible Old Sarah,' whom it indirectly likened to Eve, which may certainly be accepted as evidence of imagina-

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

tion. By the time it was in type the author was already well advanced in the regulation Grand Tour. His first tarrying-place was Lunéville in the then independent Duchy of Lorraine. But despite letters of introduction from Sir Robert Walpole to the Prince de Craon, and despite the civilities of the reigning Duke, Lyttelton speedily wearied of his environment. In the leading amusements, hunting and the interminable quadrille, he took no part; the English residents were an 'unimproving society' who would not let him learn French, while the scrupulous punctilio of a petty court was intolerable to one who by nature was unusually absorbed and absent. He consequently obtained his father's leave to move to Soissons, where a congress was then engaged in the negotiations which, a year later, ended in the Treaty of Seville. One of the English plenipotentiaries was Stephen Poyntz, formerly Envoy to Sweden, with whom he became domesticated, and to some extent instructed in matters diplomatic. What was more, he began to make rapid progress in French, writing frequently in that language to his father. He was in Paris at the general jubilation for the birth of the Dauphin of 4th September 1729. 'The expressions of their [the Parisians'] joy,' he says, 'are admirable: one fellow gives notice to the publick, that he designs to draw teeth for a week together on the Pont Neuf gratis.'¹ From Soissons he passed in the following October to Geneva, stopping on his way, like every one else, at the Convent of the Chartreuse. Then he went on to Turin, Genoa, Venice, and Rome, from which place his last letter is dated in May 1730. His correspondence has little of the incidents of travel—indeed, he specially disclaims the keeping of a journal and the copying of inscriptions. But one of his letters, written from Lyons in October 1729, contains a careful summary of the state of France under the young King Louis XV and his minister Cardinal Fleury—a sketch which, by its references to the abject slavery of the people, the swarms of idle ecclesiastics, the demands of military service, the

¹ Letter of 8th September [1729].

Eighteenth Century Studies

chimerical class distinctions, and the grinding poverty of the country in general, seems, even at this early date, to anticipate and presage the coming storm of revolution.¹

In a rhymed epistle written from Paris to Dr. Ayscough, Lyttelton had already not inaptly sketched the contemporary French characteristics:

A nation here I pity and admire,
Whom noblest sentiments of glory fire,
Yet taught, by custom's force, and bigot fear,
To serve with pride, and boast the yoke they bear:
Whose nobles, born to cringe, and to command,
In courts a mean, in camps a generous band;
From each low tool of power, content receive
Those laws, their dreaded arms to Europe give:
Whose people (vain in want, in bondage blest;
Though plunder'd, gay; industrious, though oppress'd)
With happy follies rise above their fate.
The jest and envy of each wiser state.²

This was not the writer's only production in verse during the Grand Tour. In the same year he addressed a commendatory epistle to his friend Mr. Poyntz; and from Rome he sent, through his father, another to Pope. In this, after some prefatory compliment, the spirit of Virgil is invoked to dissuade Pope from Satire—'the least attractive' of the Muses. Upon this matter Lyttelton had already delivered himself in an earlier letter. 'I am sorry he wrote the "Dunciad"' he says; and in sending

¹ Twenty-four years later comes a more definite note from Chesterfield: 'All the symptoms, which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and revolutions in government, now exist, and daily increase, in France.' (Letter to his Son, 25th December 1753.) Later, July 1760, things were slowly growing worse. 'The French,' said Goldsmith, . . . 'are imperceptibly vindicating themselves into freedom. . . . I cannot help fancying that the genius of freedom has entered that kingdom in disguise. If they have but three weak monarchs more, successively on the throne, the mask will be laid aside, and the country will certainly once more be free.' ('Citizen of the World,' letter lvi.) There was but one weak monarch, and yet it was twenty-nine years to the taking of the Bastille.

² After transcribing this passage in its place it was pleasant to find that it had been chosen for commendation by no less a personage than Voltaire. 'These verses,' he wrote to Lyttelton in May 1750, 'deserve a good translator, and they should be learn'd by every Frenchman.'

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

the poem to Sir Thomas, he refers to 'the good piece of advice' he has ventured to give, he hopes opportunely. If not taken, it was, at all events, not taken amiss, for Pope made several subsequent references to his young friend, all of them kind. Moreover he even condescended to correct four eclogues which, under the title of the 'Progress of Love,' Lyttelton printed in 1732. But they are not their poet's masterpieces; and belong distinctly—as much as their model, Pope's own 'Pastorals'—to the artificial growths of Parnassus. One can well imagine old Johnson blinking scornfully into that sham Arcadia, with its Delias and Damons. They 'cant,' he says, 'of shepherds and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers'—things which, to be sure, were never to be encountered in Fleet Street. Lyttelton is far better in the 'Advice to a Lady,' of a year earlier. This is full of good sense, although the superior tone assumed by 'mere man,' if approved by Dorothy Osborne or Mary Evelyn, would scarcely commend itself in the present day:

Let e'en your *prudence* wear the pleasing dress
Of care for *him*, and anxious *tenderness*.
From kind concern about his weal or woe,
Let each domestick duty seem to flow.
The *household sceptre* if he bids you bear,
Make it your pride his *servant* to appear:
Endearing thus the common acts of life,
The *mistress* still shall charm him in the *wife*,
And wrinkled age shall unobserv'd come on,
Before his eye perceives one beauty gone;
E'en o'er your cold, your ever-sacred urn,
His constant flame shall unextinguish'd burn.

From the last couplet the poet evidently expected the pattern spouse to predecease her husband, an arrangement which would scarcely have found favour with Mrs. Bennet of 'Pride and Prejudice.' Johnson justly praises the 'Advice to a Lady,' but it is not difficult to understand how its somewhat tutorial note prompted the witty summary, or 'pocket version,' of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu:

Be plain in dress, and sober in your diet:
In short, my deary, kiss me and be quiet.

Eighteenth Century Studies

Unless we class Lyttelton's letters as prose works, his earliest published effort in this way was a 'little treatise' entitled 'Observations on the Life of Cicero,' which appeared in 1731, and passed through two editions. Joseph Warton, who knew the author, thought highly of this essay; and indeed, preferred its 'dispassionate and impartial character of Tully' to those later and more pretentious volumes of Conyers Middleton which Lord Hervey so carefully purged of 'low words and collegiate phrases.'¹ But Lyttelton's first prose production of importance is the 'Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan.' These, some of which, from a sentence in his opening letter to his father, must have been sketched before he went abroad, are avowed imitations of Montesquieu, whom he had known in England previous to 1734, and to this date the majority of them probably belong. According to Warton, in later life their author felt they contained 'principles and remarks which he wished to retract and alter,' and he would willingly have withdrawn them from his works. But not lightly is the written word recalled: and the booksellers did not let them die, for all their evidences of that 'spirit of Whiggism' which his continental experiences of arbitrary power had confirmed, and which made him, on his return, the favourite of the Prince of Wales and the sworn foe of his father's patron, Walpole. In general, they present much the same features as most of the imitations prompted by Montesquieu's famous book. The author visits the various places of amusement, marvels at the sensuous effeminacy of the Italian Opera, the brutalities of the bear-garden, the forlorn condition of the poor debtor, the craze for cards, the prevalence of intrigue, the immorality of stage plays—and so forth. Other letters deal with political corruption, the humours of elections, the inequality of Parliamentary representation, the apathy of the clergy.

¹ Acting upon a polite suggestion of Middleton, Lyttelton afterwards returned to this subject in some 'Observations on the Roman History' which are included in vol. i of the third edition of his 'Works,' 1776.

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

Some of the points raised are still in debate, as the functions of the House of Lords and the shortcomings of a too-exclusively-classical education. In the thirty-eighth letter there is an illustration, which, whether borrowed or not, has become popular. Speaking of the supplies granted by the Commons to the Government, it is said 'that when these gifts are most liberal, they have a natural tendency, like plentiful exhalations drawn from the earth, to fall again upon the place from whence they came.' Elsewhere, there is a compliment to Pope: 'We have a *very great poet* now *alive*, who may boast of one glory to which no member of the French Academy can pretend, viz., that he never flattered any man *in power*, but has bestowed immortal praises upon *those* whom, for fear of offending men *in power*, if they had lived in France, under the same circumstances, no poet would have dared to praise.' Pope must have recollected this when, two years later, he spoke, in the 'Imitations of Horace,' of 'young Lyttelton' as 'still true to Virtue and as warm as true.' It is perhaps a natural thing to contrast the 'Persian Letters' with the later 'Citizen of the World'; and to wonder why one is forgotten and the other remembered. The reason is not far to seek. If Goldsmith's book had been no more than the ordinary observations of an intelligent and educated spectator, it would scarcely be the classic it remains. But the 'Citizen' has humour and fancy and genius, of which there is nothing in Lyttelton. His portraits of his father (letter xxxvi), and of Bishop Hough of Worcester (letter lvi), already celebrated in the 'Epistle to Ayscough,' are filial and friendly; but they are not the 'Man in Black,' or the unapproachable 'Beau Tibbs.' The most to be said of the 'Persian Letters' is, that they are common-sense comments on contemporary ethics, politics, and philosophy; and that, for so young a man, they are exceptionally mature.

The 'Persian Letters' appeared in 1735; and up to that date Lyttelton's metrical productions, subsequent to the 'Advice to a Lady,' had been confined to versions of Horace and Tibullus, and conventional invocations of a

Eighteenth Century Studies

real or imaginary 'Delia,' one of which last with the burden 'Tell me, my heart, if this be love?' should have been popular as a song.¹ To this period also belongs an epigram—in the Greek sense—which has found its way into some of the anthologies:

None without hope e'er lov'd the brightest fair:
But Love can hope, where Reason would despair.

From 1735, however, until his marriage seven years later to Miss Lucy Fortescue, most of his poetry was addressed to this lady, and several of the pieces, though purely occasional, have a grace which seems born of genuine impulse. A little octave, too, of this date, addressed to Gilbert West, of Wickham, is justly commended by Mr. Courthope as exhibiting something of the simplicity which was to be a leading feature of the coming Nature-worship. Lyttelton's wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, died in January 1747; and what was generally accounted his best poem is the long monody he consecrated to her memory. Of this, the best latter-day report must be that, like the obsequious curate's egg, it is 'excellent in parts.' Gray, a critic from whom, in any age, it is difficult to differ, regarded it as at times 'too stiff and poetical,' by which latter epithet he no doubt meant to deprecate the employment, in a piece aiming above all at unfeigned expression, of classical accessory and conventional ornament. 'Nature and sorrow, and tenderness, are the true genius of such things'—he wrote unanswerably to Walpole; and these he found in some degree, particularly in the fourth stanza, which every one consequently quotes after him. But that which immediately follows, its awkward closing couplet excepted, is nearly as good:

O shades of Hagley, where is now your boast?
Your bright inhabitant is lost.
You she preferr'd to all the gay resorts
Where female vanity might wish to shine,

¹ Hood, at all events, remembered it in one of his queer little sketches for 'Whims and Oddities.' Another song, 'The heavy hours are almost past,' is said to have been a favourite with Fox. (Rogers's 'Table Talk,' 1856, p. 95.)

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

The pomp of cities, and the pride of courts,
Her modest beauties shunn'd the publick eye;
To your sequester'd dales
And flower-embroider'd vales
From an admiring world she chose to fly:
With Nature there retir'd, and Nature's God,
The silent paths of wisdom trod,
And banish'd every passion from her breast,
But those, the gentlest and the best,
Whose holy flames with energy divine
The virtuous heart enliven and improve,
The conjugal and the maternal love.

With the death of Mrs. Lyttelton has sometimes been connected her husband's next prose work, the pamphlet entitled 'Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul'; and it is perhaps not an unreasonable conjecture that his bereavement should have turned his thoughts in more serious directions. But from a letter which he addressed to Thomson the poet in May 1747, it is clear that the 'Observations' were composed several months before Mrs. Lyttelton died. 'I writt it' (the pamphlet), he says, 'in Kew Lane [where Thomson lived] last year, and I writt it with a particular view to your satisfaction. You have therefore a double right to it, and I wish to God it may appear to you as convincing as it does to me, and bring you to add the faith to the heart of a Christian.' This is not inconsistent with the statement made in the opening lines that the 'Observations' arose out of a late discussion with Gilbert West, in which Lyttelton had contended that the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, taken by themselves, were sufficient to prove Christianity a divine revelation, though it perhaps supports Johnson's allegation in West's life that 'at Wickham, Lyttelton received that conviction which produced his "Dissertation on St. Paul."' What seems to have happened is this. Both West and his cousin, having come in early life under the influence of Bolingbroke and Lord Cobham, had felt difficulties of belief. West, indeed, admitted that for a season he had actually gone over to the hostile camp; but Lyttelton, he declared, had made 'little or no progress in those pernicious principles.' However, about 1746 they had both been attentively

Eighteenth Century Studies

studying the 'evidences and doctrines of Christianity.' In West's case these investigations produced his 'Observations on the Resurrection,' which appeared in December 1746, and were followed in 1747 by Lyttelton's 'Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul.' Both works long retained a distinguished place in theological literature, but it is with Lyttelton's that we are here most concerned.¹ Warburton thought it 'the noblest and most masterly argument for the truth of Christianity that any age had produced'; while Johnson declared, with equal fervour, that it was 'a treatise to which infidelity had never been able to fabricate a specious answer.' West's far bulkier volume procured him an Oxford Doctorate of Laws; and from Spence's 'Anecdotes' we learn that Lyttelton was concurrently offered a similar distinction. He however declined it on the ground that his work was anonymous, contenting himself with the commendations of his friends, and the heartfelt gratification of his father.

By his father's death in 1751 he became Sir George; and five years later, with the break-up of the Newcastle ministry, he was created Baron Lyttelton of Frankley, near Hagley. This ends his official life as a politician; and his chief literary productions during the seventeen years which remained to him were three in number. The first is a couple of letters, included in the third volume of his works, describing a visit to Wales in 1756, and addressed to that notorious Archibald Bower whose dishonest 'History of the Popes' was exposed by Goldsmith's 'scourge of impostors,' Dr. Douglas. Lyttelton, however, if he did not believe Bower, seems to have thought better of him than most people, and could never be induced to disown him. The chief merit of the letters is their note of genuine enthusiasm for natural beauty. The 'Dialogues of the Dead,' his next work, is avowedly reminiscent of Lucian, Fénelon and Fontenelle; but it is his best effort, for all that Walpole profanely called it

¹ The author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' 10th ed., 1799, p. 203, includes Lyttelton, along with Butler and Paley, in a list of eight books indispensable to students of Theology.

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

'Dead Dialogues,' and despite Landor and the admirable 'New Lucian' of the late Henry Duff Traill, may still be read with interest. What particular faint praise Johnson intended to convey by saying that the dialogues are 'rather effusions than compositions' must depend on some subtle distinction between pouring and mixing which escapes us; but they are certainly fluent and clear, and could only have been 'effused' by a writer of exceptional taste and scholarship. To-day some of the shades evoked are more than shadowy. But it is still good to read of the 'Roi Soleil' discoursing with Peter the Great on their relative systems of sovereignty; to listen to staunch old Chancellor Oxenstiern upbraiding Christina of Sweden for abdicating the throne of Gustavus Adolphus in order to consort with a parcel of painters and poetasters; or to admire at Apicius and the epicure Dartineuf (Dodsley's master and Pope's ham-pie 'Darty') comparing the merits of Juvenal's muraena with those of the Severn lamprey, and smacking ghostly lips over the 'apolaustic gulosities' of Lucullus and Æsopus the player. Dartineuf and Apicius are finally lamenting that they had lived too early for West Indian turtle, when they are roughly recalled by Mercury to the virtues of Spartan 'black broth' and an appetite. As might be expected, several of the dialogues turn upon literary topics. There is an edifying discourse between 'Dr. Swift' and 'Mr. Addison,' touching the curious freak of fortune which made one a divine and the other a minister of State, with some collateral digression on their relative forms of humour; there is another between Locke the dogmatizer and Bayle the doubter. Virgil and Horace interchange compliments until they are interrupted by the creaking pedantries of Scaliger, who has to be summarily put in his proper place by a reminder from the wand of the shepherd of souls. But the longest and ablest colloquy is between Boileau and Pope, who review the literature of their respective countries. This was a theme in which Lyttelton was at home. What is said of Shakespeare and Molière, of Milton and Pope's 'Homer,' of the true function of history, of the

Eighteenth Century Studies

new French *comédie mixte*, in undeniable, while the sentiment with which Pope winds up might stand for a definition of intellectual *entente cordiale*: 'I would have them [the French] be perpetual competitors with the English in manly wit and substantial learning. But let the competition be friendly. There is nothing which so contracts and debases the mind as national envy. True wit, like true virtue, naturally loves its own image, in whatever place it is found.' ¹

One result of the 'Dialogues of the Dead,' was to embroil the author with some of the living. Voltaire, on receipt of the volume—and writing in English—warmly contested the allegation placed in the mouth of Boileau ('Dialogue' xiv, p. 134) that he had been banished France on account of his doctrines. He pointed out with much ill-concealed irritation that, although he enjoyed 'a little country house near *Geneva*,' his manors (of Ferney and Tournay) were situate in France; and that he had never been exiled.² He signed himself 'Gentleman of the King's Chamber,' and dated from 'my castle of Tornex [Tournay] in Burgundy.' Lyttelton replied in conciliatory terms; and Voltaire—this time from his 'castle of Ferney'—rejoined by asking that a contradiction should be printed, in terms which he suggested. The offending passage, however, disappeared entirely from Lyttelton's edition of 1765. But as 'Sylvanus Urban,' reproducing the correspondence, did not fail to observe, Voltaire's tenacious insistence on his social status and possessions contrasted oddly with his former censure of Congreve's vanity in wishing to be regarded as a gentleman rather than a writer.³ Another objector, at a later date, was John Wesley, who, although he professed himself in hearty agreement with great part of Lyttelton's book, was much

¹ Walpole says that by Pericles, Lyttelton figured Pitt; and by Penelope, his first wife, Lucy Fortescue.

² Technically this was true; but he could not return to Paris. He had astutely purchased land on either side of the frontier near Geneva, and thus secured to himself retreats both in France and Switzerland.

³ 'Letters concerning the English Nation,' 1733, pp. 188-9.

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

exercised by the statement of Mercury, in the dialogue between Addison and Swift, that the Methodists, Moravians and Hutchinsonians were a strange brood spawned by 'Martin'—that is, Martin Luther—in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub.' 'Is this language,' he asks indignantly in his 'Diary' for August 1770, 'for a nobleman or a porter?' And he goes on to question whether his lordship really knew any more of the matter than he had learned from the caricatures of Bishops Lavington and Warburton. His anger was pardonable, though Lyttelton would probably have explained that he spoke dramatically, and was not responsible for Mercury's bad manners. As a matter of fact, he was suspected of being more in favour of Methodism than against it.

Lyttelton's *magnum opus*—great by its quantity rather than its quality—was his long-incubated 'History of Henry II.' Originally designed for the service of the Prince of Wales, he had been collecting material for it as early as 1741, but his progress, being interrupted by politics, was intermittent. 'The little leisure I have at present for writing [he informs Doddridge six years later] will, I believe, be taken up in finishing my history of King Henry the Second, of which four books are already written and I have two more to write. . . . I am far from thinking, I have writt it so well as it might be written, but of this I am sure—that I have done it more justice than they ['our historians'], were it only in the pains I have taken to get all the information that contemporary authors could give me upon the subject, which as yet no others have done.' So much pains did he take, that it was eight years more before he managed to go to press; and even then the whole book 'was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many sheets four or five times.' What Johnson calls his 'ambitious accuracy' made him employ a 'pointer' or punctuating expert, at increased cost to himself, and with the astounding result that the third edition comprised no fewer than nineteen pages of errata. It may be that some of this meticulous desire to be correct was prompted by fear of Smollett and the

Eighteenth Century Studies

'Critical Review'; but it was obviously subversive of spontaneity, and could not fail to attract the persiflage of mockers like Walpole. 'His [Lyttelton's] "Henry II" raises no more passion than Burn's "Justice of Peace,"' this reader said; and he had earlier expressed the opinion that the dread of present and future critics rendered Lyttelton's works 'so insipid that he had better not have written them at all.' To Lyttelton, nevertheless, he praised the first instalment. In 1771 the book was finished, the first three volumes having then gone into three editions, which indicates a certain popularity. The two leading historians, however, were not enthusiastic. Hume sneered at it; and Gibbon, who reviewed it in the 'Mémoires littéraires de la Grande Bretagne,' says in his 'Autobiography' that it was 'not illuminated by a ray of genius.' But in his published notice, while refusing to the author the praise due to Robertson and Hume, he gives him the credit of being a '*bon citoyen*,' a '*savant très éclairé*' and an '*écrivain exact et impartial*.' Possibly the modern school of historians would do greater justice to Lyttelton's minute and painstaking method. Hallam quotes 'Henry II' repeatedly; and the author of the 'Short History of England' calls it a 'full and sober account of the time.'

As a politician and statesman, Lyttelton was naturally well known to many prominent contemporaries. But to speak here of Pitt or Bolingbroke — of Warburton or Horace Walpole — would occupy too large a space; and it must suffice in this connection to single out three or four exclusively literary figures to whom he stood in the special light either of intimate or patron. With Pope, who praised him more than once in print, he had been acquainted before the Grand Tour; and Pope, as we have seen, had corrected his 'Pastorals.' When later Lyttelton, succeeding Bubb Dodington, became the Prince of Wales's secretary, Pope was gradually drawn into the Leicester House circle. Both the secretary and his royal master made frequent visits to Twickenham; and there were records, on urns and garden seats, of Pope's sojourns at

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

Hagley. One of these described him as 'the sweetest and most elegant of English poets, the severest chastiser of vice, and the most persuasive teacher of wisdom.' As far as one can gauge Pope's complex nature, he seems to have been genuinely attracted to his young admirer. 'Few have or ought to have so great a share of me' he writes in 1736; and Lyttelton, retorting four years later in the House of Commons to Henry Fox's taunt that he consorted with an 'unjust and licentious lampooner,' replied proudly that he regarded Pope's friendship as an honour. It was to Lyttelton that Pope said on his death-bed: 'Here am I dying of a hundred good symptoms'; and to Lyttelton he left by will four marble busts of poets which the Prince had given him in 1739 for his library. These, representing Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden, were still at Hagley when Carruthers wrote Pope's life.

Another visitor to Lyttelton's Worcestershire home was the genial and indolent¹ author of 'The Seasons,' for whom he cherished a regard even greater than that which linked him to the pontiff of the eighteenth-century Parnassus. He must have known Thomson for some years previous to his first appearance at Hagley, for he had already secured him a small pension from the Prince of Wales. But in August 1743 we find Thomson domiciled at Hagley, rejoicing in its 'quite enchanting' park, and in the superiority of the 'Muses of the great simple country' to the 'little fine-lady Muses' of his own Richmond Hill. With Lyttelton's aid he corrected 'The Seasons' for the new edition of 1744, adding, in 'Spring,' a description of Hagley, an address to Lyttelton, and references to that 'loved Lucinda,' whom, two years earlier, Lyttelton had brought home to his father's house. Lyttelton it was who procured for Thomson the sinecure appointment of Surveyor-General of the Leeward Islands; and, as we have

¹ There is a delightful illustration of this in the 'Maloniana.' Dr. Burney, finding Thomson in bed at two o'clock, asked him how he came to lie so long. He answered, in his Scottish fashion, 'Because he had no *mot-tive* to rise.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

seen, it was under Thomson's roof that the 'Conversion of St. Paul' was penned. Whether Lyttelton was responsible for eight out of the nine lines describing Thomson in the 'Castle of Indolence' is doubtful; but it is certain that the poet depicted his Hagley host in the stanza beginning

Another guest ¹ there was, of sense refined,
Who felt each worth, for every worth he had;
Serene yet warm, humane yet firm his mind,
As little touched as any man's with bad:
Him through their inmost walks the Muses lad,
To him the sacred love of nature lent,
And sometimes would he make our valley glad—

though he could not persuade himself to reside there permanently. Poor, perspiring Thomson, 'more fat'—in his own words—'than bard beseems,' did not survive his best poem many months. But his friend's regard followed him beyond the grave; and in Lyttelton's prologue to Thomson's posthumous tragedy of 'Coriolanus' occurs the oft-quoted couplet crediting its author with

Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line which dying he could wish to blot.²

To a third poet, who also contributed his 'rhymed regrets' to Thomson's memory, both Lyttelton and Thomson occasionally paid visits. In Halesowen parish, not many miles away, lived Shenstone, whose 'Judgment of Hercules' had been addressed to Lyttelton, and who was gradually turning his paternal farm at the Leasowes into a paradise of landscape gardening and cows (like Walpole's) coloured to fancy. Indeed, if we are to believe contemporary tittle-tattle, the laurels of the Leasowes affected the sleep of Hagley. But we care nothing for gossip in this instance. Shenstone, moreover—whose likings have been described as 'tepid'—seems to have been a more neighbourly acquaintance than a close in-

¹ That is—at the Castle of Indolence.

² The question of Lyttelton's literary relations with Thomson is exhaustively and conclusively treated in Mr. G. C. Macaulay's excellent monograph on Thomson in the 'Men of Letters' series, 1908.

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

timate; and we turn from his to another name with which that of Lyttelton is more definitely connected. Fielding, as short-lived as Thomson, had been Lyttelton's school-mate at Eton. Yet save for a reference to Lyttelton in Fielding's 'True Greatness,' until the period which followed the first Mrs. Fielding's death, we hear little of their relations, although Fielding expressly, both in a letter congratulating Lyttelton on his second marriage,¹ and in the 'Dedication' of 'Tom Jones,' makes reference to Lyttelton's past good offices. 'To you, sir,' he writes, 'it is owing that this History was ever begun. It was by your Desire that I first thought of such a Composition . . . I partly owe to you my Existence during great Part of the Time which I have employed in composing it.' It is also known that Lyttelton was instrumental in obtaining for him that office of Middlesex magistrate in which he ended his days. Whether he was much at Hagley cannot be directly affirmed, though he probably stayed there occasionally during the progress of his masterpiece. But the only positive evidence of his commerce with its owner outside London is the record of the reading of 'Tom Jones' in manuscript to Lyttelton, Pitt (afterwards Lord Chatham), and Sanderson Miller the architect, at Radway Grange, the house of the last-named, near Edge Hill, in Warwickshire.²

Lyttelton's benefactions to Fielding were acknowledged by their recipient with all the generosity of gratitude that characterized him. But Lyttelton was not equally fortunate in every case where he desired to assist. Smollett, for example, arriving from Glasgow in all the ardour of youthful talent with a tragedy in its pocket, applied to him for his interest. To get 'The Regicide' acted, however, was beyond the power of patronage; and though

¹ Lyttelton married again; but, as Johnson says curtly, 'the experiment was unsuccessful.'

² 'Rambles Round Edge Hills,' by the Rev. George Miller, 1896, pp. 16-17. Sanderson Miller, it is here stated, designed the alterations made by Lyttelton at Hagley in 1759-60. He was also responsible for an earlier 'ruined castle' in the park, which (according to Walpole) had 'the true rust of the Barons' Wars.' (Toynbee's 'Walpole's Letters,' iii (1903), p. 186.)

Eighteenth Century Studies

Lyttelton doubtless did what he could, he was unsuccessful. In revenge, the disappointed author brought him into 'Roderick Random' as Earl Sheerwit, 'a Maecenas in the nation'—an indignity subsequently aggravated by the portrait of Gosling Scrag, patron of letters, in 'Peregrine Pickle.' What was worse still, in the same novel Smollett allowed himself to perpetrate a very miserable parody of the 'Monody,' which had certainly enough of sincerity to deserve the respect due to its theme. For these and other exhibitions of bad temper, Smollett's better judgment eventually made apology, both in the later editions of 'Pickle,' and in his 'History'—apology which now serves chiefly to authenticate the original offence. Another person, befriended by Lyttelton, was Edward Moore of the 'Fables for the Fair Sex,' who had courted Lyttelton's attention by an ingenious complimentary poem entitled 'The Trial of Selim the Persian for Divers High Crimes and Misdemeanours'—Selim being the Selim of the 'Persian Letters,' whom it was designed to defend against certain contemporary pamphleteers. Johnson, whose utterances about Lyttelton have always a note of acerbity, says that Moore was 'paid with kind words' alone; but it was nevertheless owing greatly to Lyttelton's exertions that Moore was launched on his most successful enterprise, 'The World,' for it was Lyttelton who obtained him most of the aristocratic contributors who ensured its circulation. Finally, it was probably through the mediation of Lyttelton that David Mallet received his Under-Secretaryship to the Prince of Wales—a service which Mallet is assumed to have repaid by loosing upon Lyttelton as a suitor his excitable and vindictive compatriot, Mr. Tobias George Smollett.

In his portrait at the National Portrait Gallery, Lyttelton, although a little gaunt and angular, is represented as dignified and sufficiently personable. He has not fared so well at the hands of the literary artists. Hervey's sketch is in his usual malevolent manner: Walpole's is a witty caricature. 'With the figure of a spectre, and the

Lyttelton as Man of Letters

gesticulations of a puppet '—writes Horace—' he talked heroics through his nose, made declamations at a visit, and played at cards with scraps of history or sentences of Pindar.' Neither of these presentments should matter much; but they have been in some measure supported by the discussion which has finally identified Lyttelton with the 'respectable Hottentot'¹ whom his relative, Lord Chesterfield, held up as an awful warning to that other awful warning, Philip Stanhope the younger. It is a portentous picture—from the Chesterfield point of view—of physical ungainliness, personal gaucherie, and habitual absence of mind. That it is purposely heightened there is little doubt; but that it had a kind of basis in truth, must be inferred from the fact that friendly Mr. Poyntz, writing from France to the elder Lyttelton as early as 1729, notes his son's already confirmed habits of abstraction, 'even at meals,' which he charitably attributes to dyspepsia. It is said besides that his voice was disagreeable, and his utterance monotonous. But if we allow his external disabilities to have been exaggerated by unsympathetic report, there can be no question as to his mental endowments. He may not have been a great orator; but he was capable and, on set occasions, impressive. 'He spoke well when he had studied his speeches,' says Walpole, who was also kind enough to allow that he was not wanting in ability, and that he loved 'to reward and promote merit in others.' Chesterfield also sets out by testifying to his 'moral character,

¹ It is refreshing to think that the impeccable Croker went wrong here. 'It was certainly meant for Johnson,' he says. Some of young Stanhope's *bévue*s, it appears, had to be concealed from his affectionate parent. 'He was . . . even in his riper days,' writes Lord Charlemont, 'a perfect Tony Lumpkin,' and he goes on to relate an anecdote told him by Lord Eliott, an eye-witness, which has a further connection with Goldsmith. Once at Berne, in his boyhood, young Stanhope tied the periwigs of a number of grave and reverend Swiss senators to the backs of their chairs, and then lustily cried 'Fire!' on which they all bounced up affrighted and bald-headed. (Charlemont Corr., Hist. MSS. Comm., i, 1891, 327.) This is precisely the trick which the hero of 'She Stoops to Conquer' is said, in Act I, to have played on Mr. Hardcastle, and which is usually supposed to have been practised on Goldsmith himself by Lord Clare's daughter, afterwards Marchioness of Buckingham.

Eighteenth Century Studies

deep learning, and superior parts.' As to his absolute honesty and integrity, both in life and politics, there is no diversity of opinion. Nor will those who read his physician's plain account of his last hours hesitate to credit his own dying declaration that he was 'a most firm and persuaded believer of the Christian religion.' If he is to be remembered apart from the literary performances treated in this paper, it must be, not as the 'respectable Hottentot' of the high priest of the Graces, but as the model, with Ralph Allen, of Fielding's 'Mr. Allworthy.'

GARRICK'S 'GRAND TOUR'

WITH Davies and Murphy, with Boaden's bulky 'Correspondence,' with the two lives of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, and the compact monograph of the late Joseph Knight, it might not unreasonably be supposed that Garrick material, in spite of its extent, had already been sufficiently exploited. But whether the much-suspected final word has, or has not, been uttered, it must be granted that discussion of a subject from a fresh standpoint is never wholly out of date. While there are German inquirers and French appraisers (and indications are not wanting that each is learning something from the methods of the other), we may always be glad to welcome a supplementary study of Garrick, either Teutonic or Gallic, feeling assured that English writers, as well as readers, could not fail of instruction. Great biographers we have, living and dead; but it can scarcely be asserted that in this particular department the general level of craftsmanship is unimpeachable; or that performances such as the Burns of the late M. Auguste Angellier, or the Crabbe of M. René Huchon, are turned out by the dozen in our favoured land. Then, in addition to the new survey or the neglected aspect, there is the separate treatment of episodes or incidents with which a foreigner, should his own country or customs be concerned, is naturally better qualified to deal than an outsider. Rousseau or Voltaire in England are themes more suited to an Englishman than to a Frenchman: Sterne or Garrick in France, on the contrary, may offer greater facilities to a Frenchman than an Englishman. In the case of Sterne, something has been done by the capable volume issued by M. Paul Stapfer in 1870; but, in our own day, it has been reserved for Mons. F. A. Hedgcock, 'Docteur-ès-Lettres' of the

Eighteenth Century Studies

Sorbonne, to turn his special attention to Garrick's experiences abroad.'¹

To Garrick, then, as seen for the moment through alien glasses, this latest inquiry is confined. Its author does not contemplate another life of the great 'acteur cosmopolite,' as he styles him; but he professes, from sources published and unpublished, to trace out the story of Garrick's relations with the French comedians who in 1749 visited London, and also of his travels on the Continent in 1763-5. With this object M. Hedgcock has diligently examined the numerous letters written by foreigners in the thirty-five volumes of Garrick's Correspondence at South Kensington—a mine until now more prospected than explored. And to the result of his investigations, he has prefixed such a brief biographical introduction and general estimate as serve to explain and illustrate Garrick's position with respect to his Gallic contemporaries. But even this modest design affords him an opportunity of rectifying some of the undetected lapses of his forerunners. Of these corrections, the most notable is contained in an appendix to his opening chapter, disposing of the claim—never it seems put forward seriously by the actor himself—to noble French extraction. His alleged connection with the Perigourdin De la Garrigues turns out to be as unsupported as Fielding's supposed descent from the Habsburgs, since reference to the marriage register of his grandfather, David Garric, proves conclusively that the said grandfather was a Protestant 'bourgeois et marchand' of Bordeaux la Bastide; and that his wife, Jeanne, was the daughter of Jean Sarrazin, also a 'marchand,' of Pons in Saintonge. In other words, the immediate ancestors of our English Roscius were frankly middle-class and commercial; and of 'sangre azul,' as the Spaniards call it, there is no distinguishable trace.

¹ 'David Garrick et ses Amis Français,' by F. A. Hedgcock, 1911. This was a thesis presented to the University of Paris for the 'Doctorat-ès-Lettres.' M. Hedgcock, who is English by birth, and 'doctus sermones utriusque linguae,' has recently translated it, with additions (Stanley Paul and Co.). He is now lecturer in French literature in the University of Birmingham.

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

But Huguenot and Bordelais, with a dash of Irish vivacity from the maternal side, is by no means a bad histrionic blend.

Future English writers on Garrick will do wisely to note this little amendment of an oft-repeated statement, unless indeed they are in a position to contradict it—a rather remote contingency. But it is beside M. Hedgcock's intention to pick holes in Garrick's pedigree; and this is only a casual detail of the chapter prefacing his main purpose. In the same chapter he also touches briefly on Garrick's aspects as actor, Shakespeare-lover and author. As author he counts least. A fortunate epigram or a happily turned prologue does not make a poet. Nor can it be pretended that adaptations from the French, however adroit, constitute stagecraft; and it is to be noted that, in 'The Clandestine Marriage,' the only one of Garrick's pieces which has passed into the *répertoire*, the elder Colman was his collaborator.¹ Of his abridgments and readjustments of Shakespeare's text, apart from his impersonation of Shakespeare's characters, the less said the better, although, having regard to the French influence they betray, they cannot be entirely disregarded. But as an actor, there is no doubt as to his undisputed supremacy; and M. Hedgcock's quotations from Grimm and Prévile show how thoroughly this was recognized by his admirers of *Outre-Manche*. What seems to have struck them most was the

¹ It is true that he is credited with more quoted passages than some greater men. But his jewels are mostly old gems re-set. His 'fellow-feeling makes one wondrous kind,' comes virtually, like Captain Shandon's Greek and Latin, from Burton's 'Anatomy'; and, as pointed out in another paper in this series, his oft-cited couplet on the fugitive nature of the actor's art had been anticipated by Robert Lloyd. One of his less known couplets opens the 'Prologue' to that hapless 'Virginia' of Fanny Burney's 'Daddy Crisp':

PROLOGUES, like compliments, are loss of time;
'Tis penning bows, and making legs in rhyme.

The manuscript of the 'Clandestine Marriage,' it may be added, partly in Colman's and partly in Garrick's handwriting, was recently on sale in London. It has now gone—where so many good things now go—to America.

Eighteenth Century Studies

marvellous versatility which enabled him to pass instantaneously from comedy to tragedy, or vice versa.¹ And the additional fact that, like Rousseau, very few of his audience could have understood English, is a standing proof of that extraordinary facial power to which so many have testified from Johnson to Lichtenberg. Grimm's words are not new; but they will bear repetition; and we make a somewhat longer quotation than M. Hedgcock: 'It is easy to contort one's face; that may be conceived; but Garrick knows neither grimace nor exaggeration; all the changes that take place in his features arise out of the manner in which he is affected internally: he never exceeds the truth; and he knows that other inconceivable secret of improving his appearance without other aid than passion. We have seen him play the dagger scene in the tragedy of "Macbeth," in a room, in his ordinary dress, without any help from theatrical illusion; and in proportion as with his eyes he followed this dagger hanging and moving in the air, his expression became so fine ["il devenait si beau"] as to extract a general cry of admiration from all the assembly. Will it be credited that this same man, a moment afterwards, imitates with equal perfection a pastry-cook's boy, who, gaping about him in the street, his stock-in-trade on his head, lets his tray tumble in the gutter, and dumbfounded at first with his accident, ends by bursting into tears.'²

Another testimony, that of the famous Prévillé—'Mercury himself,' Sterne calls him—is less known. After speaking of the actor's obligation to assume all parts, he

¹ Sterne confirms this in a letter to Garrick from Paris of 10th April 1762: "Tis the greatest problem in nature, in this meridian, that one and the same man should possess such tragic and comic powers, and in such an equilibrio, as to divide the world for which of the two Nature intended him. ('Works,' 1798, ix, 78.)

² Grimm, 'Corr. Litt.,' July, 1765. The piewman's misadventures must have been a never failing contemporary jest. In Hogarth's 'Four Times of the Day,' 1738, a boy is shown crying uproariously because he has broken the dish he is bringing from the baker's by setting it down too smartly on a post; and in the 'March to Finchley,' 1750, a piewman, with a tray on his head, is being robbed by a man who is insidiously drawing his attention to a trick played on a milkmaid.

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

says: 'Nature is niggard of these phenomena, who appear once in a century, and such, incontestably, is a comedian so endowed. For our century this phenomenon was reserved to England: Garrick had no rival in any country, and the title [of Roscius] which he merited is still unclaimed.'¹ Probably it was this peculiar mobility of feature which led Carmontelle, in his Chantilly portrait, to depict Garrick, in one and the same design, as comedian and tragedian. Indeed (although the point does not appear to have been noted), the posture and gestures of the tragic Garrick are precisely those which he might have been expected to assume in the aforementioned scene from 'Macbeth.' He is certainly looking at something in the air, and not at his comic double.²

With Garrick's personality we may now however dispense, and pass to his foreign friends. Foremost of these was one Jean Monnet, whose very chequered experiences as page to the Duchess of Berry, printer, author, Trappist, prisoner in the Bastille, Director of the Théâtre de la Foire (de Saint Germain), and so forth, had brought him at last in 1749 to London with a troupe of French actors. He had come at the invitation of John Rich, the manager of Covent Garden; but Rich, alarmed by some ominous indications of Gallophobia, withdrew from his bargain. Thereupon Monnet, at a nonplus, turned to Garrick, who befriended him, with the result that Monnet and his company opened the little theatre in the Haymarket. Rich's apprehensions were by no means groundless. The first representation closed ignobly with a dispute between the boxes and the gallery; and silence was only secured

¹ 'Memoirs' of Prévile, 1823.

² See *ante*, p. 58. There is a passage in Diderot's 'Paradoxe sur le Comédien' which is worth quoting in this connection: 'Garrick will put his head between two folding doors, and in the course of five or six seconds his expression will change successively from wild delight to temperate pleasure, from this to tranquillity, from tranquillity to surprise, from surprise to blank astonishment, from that to sorrow, from sorrow to the air of one overwhelmed, from that to fright, from fright to horror, from horror to despair, and thence he will go up again to the point from which he started. (W. H. Pollock's translation, 1883, p. 38.)

Eighteenth Century Studies

for the second by a formidable cohort of hired butchers and watermen. Finally the Lord Chamberlain stopped the performance; and Monnet had to console himself as he could with the subventions of his supporters, and a benefit generously bestowed on him by Garrick. The result of these things was a lifelong friendship between the two men; and there are some fifty of Monnet's letters to Garrick in the Forster Collection. Henceforth it is Monnet who becomes, so to speak, Garrick's indefatigable agent and Paris correspondent. 'Coiffures' and laces for Mrs. Garrick; new plays and engravings for her husband; dancers, cooks, jewellers, professors of French—in all these matters Monnet is the adviser and universal provider; and the more devoted and assiduous, because, before a few years are over, his regained position as Director of the Opéra Comique has left him an enriched and unoccupied man.¹ He gave Garrick invaluable aid in the lighting and decorating of Drury Lane; and it was to Monnet that Garrick was indebted for an introduction to one of his most useful coadjutors, Casanova's pupil, the painter Philip de Loutherbourg, who eventually became superintendent of the scenery and machinery of the theatre. More than one of Garrick's occasional pieces owed their existence, if not their origin, to the effective picture-setting of de Loutherbourg. A second notability whom Monnet sent to Garrick was the pyrotechnist, Torr  , to whose Marylebone Garden fireworks Dr. Johnson unkindly, and quite indefensibly, compared the metrical 'coruscations' of the author of 'An Elegy in a Country Church Yard.' Lastly, it was through Monnet that Garrick made the acquaintance of yet another luminary of Marylebone, Haydn's friend, Barth  l  mon the violinist, who, beginning as leader of the band there, ended by conducting the orchestra at Vauxhall.

To visit Monnet, Garrick, in all probability, made his first journey to Paris, taking with him his wife, Eva Maria

¹ One of C. N. Cochin's profiles, excellently engraved by Saint-Aubin, gives an attractive idea of Monnet. It has also a neatly appropriate motto: '*Mulcet, movet, monet.*'

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

Violette, to whom he had been married two years before; and 'who (adds Davies) from the day of her marriage to the death of her husband, had never been separated from him for twenty-four hours.' One of his fellow travellers is said to have been Sir George Lewis, afterwards murdered in the Forest of Bondy.¹ Another 'compagnon de voyage' was 'M. Denis,' who *may* have been that Charles Denis, the later friend of Churchill and Robert Lloyd, whom the latter fondly regarded as 'La Fontaine by transmigration'—a description which, judging from the versions in the 'St. James's Magazine,' suggests an imperfect estimate of the supreme art of the French 'conteur.' It is unfortunate that Garrick's journal of 1751 has been lost, as this fact, coupled with the fact that the record was probably restricted to Monnet's circle, has of necessity limited M. Hedgcock's investigations. As regards Garrick's presentation to Louis XV., M. Hedgcock has discovered no confirmatory evidence. But he has disinterred from the 'Journal' of the vaudevillist, Charles Collé—who is his authority for the mention of Denis, and who, like Carmontelle, was one of the readers to the 'gros Duc' of Orléans—an entry relating to a meeting on 12th July, between the 'French Anacreon' and the 'English Roscius.' Garrick acted for Collé the famous dagger-scene, of which Grimm's account has already been quoted; and Collé's recollections fully bear out Grimm's report. 'He [Garrick] filled us with terror; it is not possible to depict a situation better, to render it with greater warmth, and at the same time to be more self-possessed.'² 'He considers all our actors more or less

¹ With this event is associated one of the numerous legends arising out of Garrick's remarkable mimetic powers. The suspected murderer, an Italian count, was on the point of being released for want of evidence, when Garrick, making up as the dead man, extorted from the terrified criminal an admission of his guilt. The story is on a par with that later fable of the journalist de la Place, which represents Garrick as impersonating Fielding long after his death, in order to prove that, in this way, he had helped Hogarth to recall the features—the very marked features, be it added—of his former friend.

² At this date, it should be observed that, although some of Shakespeare's plays had been poorly translated by de la Place,

Eighteenth Century Studies

bad (Collé continues); and in this respect we say ditto to him.' But Garrick must have made exception in favour of Mlle. Clairon, whose merits afterwards conquered both Goldsmith and Gibbon.¹ With some professional reservations, he greatly admired her; and predicted for her the more distinguished future she achieved.

His correspondence contains but one reference to this expedition; and that is in a letter to his brother Peter, apparently written, after his return to England, from Lord Burlington's house at Chiswick: 'You ask me (he says) how I like France? It is y^e best place in the World to make a Visit to & I was indeed much satisfy'd with my Journey. . . . I had much honour done me both by French & English; & Every body and Thing contributed to make me happy. The great fault of our Countrymen is, y^t when they go to Paris, they keep too much among themselves, but if they would mix wth y^e French as I did, it is a most agreeable Jaunt.' When Garrick left Paris, and whether his departure was in any way connected with a frustrated project for attracting French talent to London, an enterprise in which the 'prévôt des marchands' found it necessary to intervene, it is impossible to say. In any case, he was back in England in July 1751.

A period of more than twelve years elapsed before he again crossed the Channel. But in the interval he added two to the list of his French friends, of whom one, by the promise of his brief life, deserves a passing mention. This was Claude-Pierre Patu, a consumptive young advocate and dramatist, much interested in England, and an enthusiast in Shakespeare and Garrick. At the end of 1754, in spite of the fogs, he came to London for a few weeks, assiduously frequenting Drury Lane Theatre. He speedily grew intimate with the accessible actor, who received him with 'une politesse vraiment française'; and,

Shakespeare was little known in France generally. The inadequate 'Hamlet' of Ducis (who had no English) was not acted until 1769; his 'Roméo et Juliette' in 1772; his 'Lear' in 1783, and his 'Macbeth' in 1784.

¹ Goldsmith's 'Bee,' 1759, No. 2; Gibbon's 'Autobiographies,' 1896, pp. 204, 262.

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

going back to France, began, like Monnet, to correspond regularly with his new friend on matters theatrical and literary. He showed much attention to Garrick's colleague, Mrs. Pritchard, when she visited Paris with her daughter; he assisted in negotiating between Garrick and the dancer Noverre. One of his projects, anticipating Johnson, was to write, in conjunction with Garrick, a 'Parnasse Anglois,' or Lives of the British Poets, which was to reveal to his benighted countrymen the unsuspected riches of our insular muse. To Fréron's 'Journal Étranger' he contributed papers on many English subjects—Mrs. Charlotte Lennox's 'Shakespeare Illustrated,' the 'Barbarossa' of Dr. Brown of the 'Estimate' (that 'Barbarossa' whose midnight bell was so dear to Johnson's 'Dick Minim'!), the alterations of Garrick in 'Romeo and Juliet,' and (perhaps) a version of Garrick's adaptation of Motteux, the 'Lying Valet.' But in 1756, he certainly issued anonymously, under the title 'Choix de Petites Pièces du Théâtre Anglois,'¹ two volumes of translations of English Plays, the second of which consisted of the 'Beggars' Opera' and the 'What d'ye Call It' of Gay, whom he greatly admired. Patu must have been a singularly engaging personage, since he succeeded in conciliating both Voltaire and Fréron; and he even contrived, at the Délices, to champion that 'amiable barbarian,' Shakespeare. Until M. Hedgcock and M. Huchon discovered him, little seems to have been known of him; and though Boaden prints his letters, French and English, Garrick's English biographers never mention his name. Unhappily, he was of those whom the Fates but show to mankind, for he died prematurely of decline

¹ This was not the first translation, for, strangely enough, it was with a version made (says Patu) 'by a German who knew neither English nor French,' that in 1749 Monnet's company had attempted to attract an English audience. Patu's rendering (now before us) is a creditable production, usefully annotated. He also translated, in his first volume, Dodsley's 'Toy-Shop,' 'King and the Miller of Mansfield,' and 'Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green,' as well as Coffey's popular 'Wives Metamorphosed,' some of which pieces found imitators in France. Sedaine's 'Diable à Quatre,' for instance, is based on Coffey.

Eighteenth Century Studies

in 1757. To England he never returned; but he retained his predilection for us to the end; and his final missive to Garrick from Naples in November 1756, the last of a packet which the actor had labelled 'Poor Patu's Letters,' closes with the Ghost's farewell in 'Hamlet'—'Adieu! *Remember me!*'

Jean-Georges Noverre, or the 'Chevalier' Noverre, another of Garrick's French friends at this date, is not at the altitude of Patu, although as a popular 'maître-de-ballet,' he was naturally more widely known. He had been introduced to Garrick by Monnet, one of whose company he had been at the Théâtre de la Foire. In 1754 he had delighted the Parisians by two elaborate choregraphic entertainments, both described as triumphs of artful variety and ingenious combination—the 'Fêtes Chinoises' and the 'Fontaine de Jouvence.' Garrick endeavoured to secure the 'Chinese Festival' troupe for Drury Lane; and after protracted preliminaries with Noverre, who, being a Swiss, developed all the mercenary aptitudes of his race, they arrived at London in November 1755. But the moment was singularly ill chosen. England was on the eve of that Seven Years' War whose origin so perplexed the eminent historian, Mr. Barry Lyndon; and animosity to 'insulting Gaul' was—especially among the lower classes—in its acutest stage. It was idle to protest to an unreasoning mob that Noverre was of another nationality; as Foote said later in the 'Minor,' the 'patriot gingerbread baker from the Borough' would not suffer 'dancers from Switzerland, because he hated the French.' Even though George II. attended the first representations of the 'Chinese Festival,' there were disturbances at the outset, which increased in intensity with every renewal of the performance. Constant collisions took place between the rival factions; blows were exchanged, swords drawn, benches torn up, mirrors and lustres smashed, and not a few persons maimed or injured. On the 18th, the disorder reached its culminating point. The unfortunate dancers were assailed with a storm of peas and tin-tacks; and as soon as the pit was cleared by

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

the boxes, it was recaptured by the gallery. At last a battalion of hired bruisers, entering the theatre, ejected the malcontents, who hurried off vindictively to smash Garrick's windows, and, if possible, burn his house in Southampton Street. So ended a fortnight's scandal. Garrick seems nevertheless to have behaved liberally to Noverre, although he had suffered heavily by the damage to his property; and it is to Noverre's subsequent '*Lettres sur les Arts imitateurs*' that we owe one of the best and most detailed accounts of Garrick's acting. It is too lengthy to reproduce entire; but it is the report of an expert eye-witness; and one or two passages confirming what has already been said may find a place here: 'He [Garrick] was so natural, his expression had so much truth, his gestures, his physiognomy, and his looks were so eloquent and so persuasive, that they placed even those who knew no English in possession of the facts of the story. He could be followed easily; he touched in the pathetic; in the tragic he aroused all the successive emotions of the most violent passions. . . . In the higher comedy he captivated and entranced; in the lesser kind he amused; and he transformed himself in the theatre with so much art that he was often unrecognized by persons who habitually lived with him. . . . He may, without partiality, be regarded as the Roscius of England, because with diction, delivery, fire, nature, wit and delicacy, he combined that pantomime and that rare expression of dumb show which characterize the great actor and the complete comedian.'

Noverre, it is safe to infer, owed much to Garrick; and it was from Garrick that he learned the sovereign use of gesture and expression, even in dancing.

With May 1756 the Seven Years' War began, and further trips to France had to be indefinitely postponed, though Garrick often cast a longing eye across the Channel, and even during the progress of hostilities cherished vague projects for re-visiting his French friends. At the Peace of Paris all these inclinations revived with new pertinacity, heightened by the reports of Sterne, who preceded him by

Eighteenth Century Studies

several months. He was grievously in want of change; his sleepless energy had impaired his health; he was fretted by petty cabals and jealousies, and, excellent actor though he was, the fickle public had grown a little weary of him. Consequently, leaving Drury Lane to his partner Lacy and his brother George, with Colman for literary assessor, he started for the Continent in September 1763, carrying with him Mrs. Garrick and his pet dog, Biddy. Four days later he reached the French capital. His first visit was to the Théâtre français, of which he was straight-way made free. Here Mlle. Dumesnil was acting in La Chaussée's 'crying comedy' of 'La Gouvernante'; and apparently struck Garrick chiefly by what Gibbon calls her 'intemperate sallies.' 'She made use,' Garrick wrote, 'of little startings and twitchings, which are visibly artificial, and the mere mimicry of the free, simple, and noble working of the passions.'¹ He called on Prévile; and on Mlle. Clairon, of whose marked advance in her new manner he had heard from Sterne. 'She is highly improved since you saw her,' Yorick had said. But the 'Blanche et Guiscard' of Saurin, then being played at the Comédie, a version of Thomson's 'Tancred and Sigismunda' in which Garrick himself had often acted Tancred, was not one of her successes, although, if we are to believe Bachaumont's 'Mémoires Secrets,' he gave her hints. This may have been the case, as the rehearsals were in progress when he arrived. But he is discreetly silent as to the piece and her part in it.

Shortly after its production at the close of September, he must have left Paris for Italy, going first to Lyons; and it was more than a year before he saw Paris again. Making his way from Lyons to Turin, he sent a gossiping letter to his brother George, asking for news of the theatre; begging him to forward Churchill's 'Ghost' (presumably Book IV., the last published); warning him not to let the sun spoil Hogarth's Election pictures (then hanging in the bow-room at Hampton House), and so forth. Perhaps the most important item of intelligence in this com-

¹ Fitzgerald's 'Garrick,' 1899, p. 284.

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

munication is the announcement that Voltaire has warmly invited him to visit Ferney, a pleasure which he proposes to defer until his return from Italy. But he is clearly much disturbed by Voltaire's declaration, in the 'Essai sur les Moeurs et l'Esprit des Nations,'¹ that there was 'more *Barbarism* than *Genius* in Shakespeare's works.' From Turin the Garricks passed to Milan; next to Genoa and Florence, where they were welcomed by Frederick the Great's Chamberlain, the poet Francesco Algarotti, then ill and failing. Garrick recommended him to try that rival in popularity to Dr. James's Fever Powder, the Tar Water of Bishop Berkeley. But tar water helped the poor 'Swan of Padua' as little as it had helped Fielding, for Algarotti died in the following year, on the very day that he had written for Garrick an introduction to some of his friends at his old home, Bologna. After a fortnight's sight-seeing in Rome the travellers went on to the Christmas festivities at Naples, whence arrive to George Garrick fresh accounts of the grand people who were everywhere fêting and flattering his illustrious brother, —Lord and Lady Spencer, Lord Exeter, Lady Orford (Horace Walpole's erratic sister-in-law), Lord Palmerston —and of endless balls, suppers and masquerades. He has 'forgot England, and all his trumpery at Drury Lane.' He is collecting musical data for Burney; he has made the acquaintance of the two Dances, one of whom, Nathaniel (afterwards Sir Nathaniel Dance Holland), was to paint him most successfully—far more successfully than Hogarth—as Richard III. He has seen all the curiosities of the neighbourhood; and in the Elysian Fields at Baiae has been so 'very near wet to the skin,' that he was incapacitated for enjoying either Caesar's Palace or Cully's villa.²

¹ Works, 1819, vol. xv, p. 94.

² Garrick's little foibles are so familiar that it is only fair to clear him of things 'not proven.' He had been annoyed, this letter shows, by some gossip in the 'St. James's Chronicle' about his dancing with ye Duke of Devonshire.' Hitherto it has been too hastily assumed that 'Duke' was a mistake for 'Duchess,' with the corollary that Garrick himself sent the story to press. But

Eighteenth Century Studies

April finds him once more at Rome, where Dance paints, and Nollekens (then six-and-twenty) models a first bust of him. In May he is at Parma, doing the dagger scene for the Duke of York and an illustrious party—'mouthing for snuff-boxes,' as one of his company afterwards irreverently put it, in reference to a present he received on this occasion. Then he follows the Duke to Venice, from which place he writes again in June to George Garrick. Both he and his wife are unwell; and they are to try the mud baths of Abano. The régime seems to have suited the lady; but her husband was not equally fortunate. 'I eat and drink too much and laugh from morning to night,' he had written from Naples. The reviser of 'Romeo and Juliet' should have remembered that 'violent delights have violent ends.' By the time (August 1764) he had reached his next stage, Munich, he was seriously ill. 'The excellent Continental cookery, the long sequence of banquets in which he had taken part, Florence wine, and the hours spent in a gondola under the oppressive Venetian atmosphere [these are M. Hedgcock's inexorable words!] had ended by producing their effect.' That is to say—he was laid up for five weeks with severe bilious fever. He was so bad that he sketched his own epitaph, which would have been more affecting, were it not probable that the whole twelve lines were composed for the sake of the last two:

Much-honoured Camden was my friend,
And Kenrick was my foe.

His illness pulled him down considerably, and he was apparently growing homesick. September found him at Augsburg debating whether he should join the Duke of Devonshire at 'The Spaw,' or pay his promised visit to Voltaire. The sudden death of the Duke on 3rd October settled one proposition; and, owing to the state of his

M. Hedgcock, conscientiously consulting the statement in situ, discovers it to be an entirely fictitious account of an imaginary fête in honour of the Peace, at which, among other things, Mr. Garrick and his Grace were to figure in a country-dance!

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

health, he determined to abandon the other. In a highly alembicate epistle, the much-corrected drafts of which are at South Kensington, he excused himself to the autocrat of Ferney, who, among other things, had politely offered his expected guest the use of his little private theatre. He should have been happy indeed (Garrick wrote) could he have been the means of bringing Shakespeare into some favour with M. de Voltaire. 'No enthusiastick Missionary who had converted the Emperor of China to his religion would have been prouder than I, could I have reconcil'd the first Genius of Europe to our Dramatick faith.' To this, after his fashion, he added a qualifying postscript: 'Tho I have called Shakespeare our dramatick faith yet I must do my country-men the Justice to declare that notwithstanding their deserv'd admiration of his astonishing Powers they are not bigotted to his errors, as some French Journalists have so confidently affirm'd.'

In the course of October he arrived at Paris, the air of which, says Grimm, perfectly restored him: and for the next six months, despite the strain of his illness, he continued a flattered centre of attraction. He took a convenient first floor in the rue St. Nicaise close to the Tuileries; and the salons of philosophedom at once flung open their doors to him. At the rue Sainte Anne, Helvétius and his wife welcomed him in their magnificent hotel, then the rendezvous of all the notabilities. 'There,' says M. Hedgcock, in a carefully wrought passage, 'he meets Diderot, the irrepressible, the inquiring, ready to discuss everything, flitting from one subject to another with astounding rapidity; D'Alembert, the decoy-bird of the dinner-table, the wittiest of talkers, who, after a morning spent over mathematical problems, came to chat of acting with the English visitor; the handsome Marмонтel, moderately gifted but much satisfied with himself; Saint-Lambert, cold, affected, very picked of speech; Grimm, the keen critic, collecting on all sides the material for his "Correspondance Secrète"; the Abbé Morellet, whom Voltaire, for his causticity, nicknamed "the Abbé

Eighteenth Century Studies

Mord-les," and others beside who composed [what Garat calls] the "*États généraux de l'esprit humain.*"'¹

Another of the houses where he was cordially received was that of the author of the '*Système de la Nature*,' Baron d'Holbach, where, in addition to most of the foregoing, he met the impressionable ex-actress and author, Mme. Riccoboni, afterwards a firm friend and one of the most constant, if most impulsive, of his correspondents. A third rallying-place was the historic salon, in the rue St. Honoré, of that '*mère nourrice des philosophes*,' Mme. Geoffrin, whose wit and conversation attracted not only Hume and Walpole, but Wilkes and Adam Smith. Here Garrick found sculptors and artists; and it was doubtless to this time that he owed his acquaintance with Joseph Vernet, the friend of Mme. Vigée-Lebrun; with Hubert Bourguignon, otherwise Gravelot, and with the statuary, J. B. Le Moyne, who exhibited a bust of him at the Salon of 1765.

In this congenial company Garrick was thoroughly at home. He was of French extraction; he spoke French as fluently as his wife spoke German; his vivacity, his tact, his insatiable '*désir de plaire*,' were all recommendations to admirers already prepossessed in his favour. He wanted no pressing to exhibit his talents—made no pretence of hesitation; but was ready at a moment's notice to gratify a sympathetic audience. 'Without waiting for the wish to become a petition, alone and surrounded by faces that almost touched his own, he played the greatest scenes of the English stage. His ordinary coat or cloak, his hat and his boots or shoes, as he arranged them, became the best conceivable costumes for every possible rôle.'² For the benefit of listeners his words were sometimes rapidly paraphrased in French by the journalist Suard; but it was needless. 'The pantomime of Garrick was the noblest, the most energetic,

¹ In his English edition M. Hedgcock has expanded this; but we preserve our version of the original passage.

² Garat, '*Mémoires historiques sur le XVIII Siècle*, etc.' 1821, Bk. v.

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

the most pathetic of translations.' In regard to this, M. Hedgcock relates once more the oft and variously told story of the friendly contest between Garrick and Mlle. Clairon at the house of Mr. Neville of the Embassy. Mlle. Clairon, to draw Garrick out, recited passages from Racine and Voltaire: Garrick responded with the dagger scene and the soliloquy in 'Hamlet.' Then, going on to the madness of Lear, he incidentally informed the company what had first taught him to depict it. It was the recollection of the poignant distress of an unhappy father who, by accident, had dropped his child from a window. And presently, leaning over the back of a chair, he re-enacted the whole scene—the father's agony, horror, insanity—with such tremendous effect that, as Murphy says, 'tears gushed from every eye in the room.' 'Never have I seen anything more dreadful,' writes Grimm, who was present; and Marmontel, another guest, after a night's rest, was still tremulously under the spell. 'If we had actors like you,' he told Garrick next day, 'our scenes would not be so diffuse; we should let their silence speak, and it would say more than our verses.' The image of Macbeth, he declared, would be for him 'the intellectual model of theatrical declamation at its highest point of energy and truth'; and he seems to imply that he should utilize his memories for a study of 'Declamation' in the 'Encyclopédie.' But the intention must have faded with the impression, for the article contains no mention of Garrick.

Lapses of this sort are not unusual in light and mercurial natures; and even Garrick himself has been accused of forgetting some of his former French associates of fourteen years earlier. Collé, in particular, bitterly resented what he regarded as the difference between the 'bon enfant' of 1751 and the pampered favourite of the philosophes whom he met again in 1765. But this complaint, as M. Hedgcock points out, is an isolated one, and there are numerous instances to prove that Garrick by no means neglected his French friends. He celebrated the success of his former prognostications respecting Mlle. Clairon with

Eighteenth Century Studies

an engraving after a drawing by Gravelot entitled 'La Prophétie Accomplie,' where Melpomene is represented crowning the actress, and to which is appended a quatrain by himself:

J'ai prédit que Clairon illustrerait la scène,
Et mon espoir n'a point été déçu;
Elle a couronné Melpomène,
Melpomène lui rend ce qu'elle en a reçu.

If it be replied, that Clairon was a far more important figure than the author of 'La Vérité dans le Vin,' 'who was diverted with everything, and laughed at nothing'; it may be added that Garrick certainly did not forget Monnet. When Monnet publishes a book, Garrick gets Becket to take a hundred copies; when Monnet has losses, Garrick offers him his purse; when he comes to London, Garrick places both the Thames villa and the Southampton Street house at Monnet's disposal, carries him to Bath, and sends him, jubilant, on his way. Ingratitude should be made of sterner stuff; and probably Garrick did not greatly care for Collé, who, moreover, grew with age intolerably cross-grained. His correspondence with Monnet ceased only with life. Garrick died on 20th January, 1779; and Monnet's last letter in the Forster collection is dated 4th December, 1778. It refers to the then recent deaths of Voltaire and Rousseau—of the comedian Bellecour and the tragedian Le Kain. 'We learn,' says the same letter, 'by our public prints that one of your compatriots has put an end to the Vicomte Du Barry with a pistol shot. If the race of the last had been exterminated ten years ago, France would be better, and Louis XV. would be still alive.' But *that* surely was not a consummation to be wished!

Garrick returned to England in April 1765, and never revisited France. In the closing chapter M. Hedgcock devotes some pages to the actor's foreign correspondence, much of which is most interesting. D'Holbach writes of Walpole's sham letter from Frederick the Great to Voltaire, and of Sedaine's recent 'Philosophe sans le Savoir'; Chastellux expatiates on the beauty of Hampton

Garrick's 'Grand Tour'

and its weeping willow; Beaumarchais acknowledges hints for the 'Barber of Seville,' and Suard and de la Place deal with themes theatrical and literary. But, for the present, our limits are reached. M. Hedgcock, referring to Garrick's protracted stay in Paris, endeavours to account for his extraordinary popularity—a popularity which no English contemporary, Hume and Sterne not excepted, had enjoyed in like measure, and of which the echoes and memories survived long after his leaving the country. That Garrick possessed many delightful social qualities specially grateful to Frenchmen—'Il était fait pour vivre parmi nous,' they were accustomed to say—is something: that, in a mimetic nation he was a superlative master of what Scott calls 'gestic art,' is something more. But the main reason is probably that here suggested. He represented at its highest the school of natural acting which the influence of the English stage and the English novel was gradually substituting on French boards for the hide-bound formalities of the old théâtre classique. He stood for truth against tradition—for the emancipating and innovating *drame sérieux* of Diderot as opposed to the rigid and retrograde *tragédie* of Voltaire; and in these respects he supplied an object lesson at once opportune and overpowering. There may have been—nay, there cannot fail to have been—other contributing causes for his success; but, in that success, this at any rate must have played a considerable part.

A FIELDING 'FIND'

FIELDING's autographs and letters are admittedly few in number. 'Where,' asked an inquiring daily paper the other day, apropos of the unprecedented sale of a Fielding receipt and agreement for more than a thousand pounds—'where is the manuscript of "Tom Jones" or of "Amelia"?' The answer is not far to seek. Probably neither now exists, since in Fielding's day authors were not so careful to preserve their 'copy' as Thackeray and Dickens and Trollope in ours. With respect to the absence of letters, there are two explanations, each of which is almost sufficient to account for their rarity. The bulk of Fielding's correspondence, it is understood, was destroyed early in the last century; and it is suggested that such of his papers as, after the sale of his library in February 1755, still remained in the custody of Sir John Fielding, his blind half-brother and successor, perished when, in 1780, the Bow Street house was wrecked by the Gordon rioters. Thus it comes about that not many specimens of Henry Fielding's epistolary efforts have been printed or preserved. Some of these are frankly formal, and consequently barren of interest; so that, with exception of one to be reproduced presently, and another to his publisher, John Nourse of the Strand, in regard to the leasing of a house near the Temple which was to include 'one large eating Parlour'¹ (a very characteristic touch!), there are practically no utterances in this kind which can be said to have any direct bearing on his biography or personality.

A fortunate circumstance has brought to light two of his latest if not his last letters, the existence of which has hitherto been overlooked; and, by the kindness of mem-

¹ This must have been eighteenth-century for 'dining-room. Miss Burney speaks of the 'eating-parlour' in the Queen's Lodge at Windsor ('Diary,' iv (1905), 277).

A Fielding 'Find'

bers of the Fielding family, transcripts of these have been courteously placed in our hands for publication. They relate to that voyage to Lisbon in search of health of which Fielding wrote the 'Journal' published posthumously in 1755; and they succeed and supplement the very valuable letter dating from the same period, already referred to. This has been printed in recent biographies of Fielding; but its close connection with the newly-discovered documents makes it convenient to print it once more. Fielding, it will be remembered, left Ealing for Lisbon on 26th June 1754. He was suffering from 'a complication of disorders'—asthma, jaundice, and dropsy. He had tried 'Spot' Ward's remedies and Bishop Berkeley's tar-water without permanent relief; and when finally, having made his will, he started for Portugal, he had little real hope of regaining his strength.¹ It is needless to recapitulate the trials and vexations of his protracted voyage, which are fully detailed in the 'Journal';² but the above-mentioned letter, it should be stated, was addressed to John Fielding, Esq., at Bow Street, Covent Garden, when its writer in the course of his travels had reached the Isle of Wight.

'On board the Queen of Portugal, Rich^d Veal at anchor on the Mother Bank, off Ryde, to the care of the Post Master at Portsmouth—this is my Date and y^r Direction.

July 12 1754.

'DEAR JACK, After receiving that agreeable Lre from Mess^{rs} Fielding and Co., we weighed on monday morning and sailed from Deal to the Westward Four Days long but inconceivably pleasant passage brought us yesterday to an Anchor on the Mother Bank, on the Back of the Isle of Wight, where we had last Night in Safety the Pleasure of hearing the Winds roar over our Heads in as violent a

¹ His death was actually announced in one of the evening papers (Godden's 'Henry Fielding,' 1910, 285).

² An edition, with numerous notes by the author of this paper, is included in the 'World's Classics' for 1907.

Eighteenth Century Studies

Tempest as I have known, and where my only Consideration were the Fears which must possess any Friend of ours, (if there is happily any such) who really makes our Well-being the Object of his Concern especially if such Friend should be totally inexperienced in Sea Affairs. I therefore beg that on the Day you receive this Mrs. Daniel may know that we are just risen from Breakfast in Health and Spirits this twelfth Instant at 9 in the morning. Our Voyage hath proved fruitful in Adventures all which being to be written in the Book you must postpone y^r Curiosity. As the Incidents which fall under y^r Cognizance will possibly be consigned to Oblivion, do give them to us as they pass. Tell y^r Neighbour I am much obliged to him for recommending me to the care of a most able and experienced Seaman to whom other Captains seem to pay such Deference that they attend and watch his Motions, and think themselves only safe when they act under his Direction and Example. Our Ship in Truth seems to give Laws on the Water with as much Authority and Superiority as you Dispense Laws to the Public and Example to y^r Brethren in Commission. Please to direct y^r Answer to me on Board as in the Date, if gone to be returned, and then send it by the Post and Pacquet to Lisbon to

‘ Y^r affect^d Brother
‘ H. FIELDING.’

This letter, apart from its manly, cheerful tone, affords a good deal of minor information. It mentions the writer's mother-in-law, Mrs. Daniel, who had probably remained at Ealing in charge of his remaining children; it gives the names of the captain and of the ship, not given in the ‘ Journal ’; it refers to the ‘ Journal ’ itself as in progress of contemplation; and it confirms the fact that John Fielding (and not Saunders Welch, as Boswell thought) was his brother's immediate successor at Bow Street. From the Isle of Wight, the ‘ Queen of Portugal ’ proceeded to Tor Bay, whence the earlier of the two new letters is dated. It is addressed as before to John Fielding:

A Fielding 'Find'

'TORR BAY, *July 22, 1754.*

'DEAR JACK Soon after I had concluded my Letter of Business to Welch yesterday, we came to an Anchor in this Place, which our Capt says is the best Harbour in the World. I soon remembered the Country and that it was in the midst of the South Hams a Place famous for Cyder and I think the best in England, in great Preference to that of Herefordshire. Now as I recollect that you are a Lover of this Liquor when mixed with a Proper Number of Midd^x Turneps, as you are of Port Wine well mixed likewise, I thought you might for the Sake of Variety be pleased with once tasting what is pure and genuine, I have therefore purchased and paid for 2 Hdds of this Cyder when they will be delivered in double Casks to y^r Order transmitted by any Master of a Coasting Vessel that comes from London to these Parts. You must send the very Paper inclosed that being the Token of the Delivery. The Freight of both by a Coaster of Devon or Cornwall will be 8 shillings only, which is I believe y^r whole Expence. They stand me within a few shillings at 4^s, and the learned here are of Opinion they are the finest of their kind, one being of the rougher the other of the sweeter Taste. Welch will easily find almost every Day one of these Coasters in London, which the Uncertainty of our Stay here and the Hurry which every Veering of the Wind puts us in prevents my providing here. It will be fit for drinking or bottling a Month after it hath lain in your Vault. I have consigned it in the following manner. Half a Hdd to yourself, half to Welch, half to Hunter and half to Millar, and I wish you all merry over it.

'In your last, there is only one Paragraph which I wish better explained. *If Boor be trusty.* Pray let me know any Shadow of a Doubt: for the very Supposition gives me much Uneasiness. If he is not trusty he is a Fool; but that is very possible for him to be, at least to catch at a lessor, and dishonest Profit, which is present and certain in Preference to what is in all Respects its Reverse. Pray give me as perfect Ease as you can in this Particular.

Eighteenth Century Studies

I begin to despair of letting my House this Summer. I hope the Sale of my Wine may be more depended on: for the almost miraculous Dilatoriness of our Voyage, tho it hath added something to the Pleasure, hath added much more to the Expense of it. In so much that I wish Welch would send a 20^l Bill of Exch^e by [*word illegible*] means immediately after me; tho I fear Boor^s Demands for Harvest Labourers have greatly emptied his hands, and I would not for good Reasons be too much a Debtor to the best of Friends. I hope at the same time to see a particular Account of the State of Affairs at Fordhook, and the whole Sum of Payments to Boor from my leaving him to the date of such Letter, when I presume the Harvest, as to England, will be pretty well over. I beg likewise an exact Account of the Price of Wheat p Load at Uxbridge. I have no more of Business to say, nor do I know what else to write you: for even the Winds with us afford no variety. I got half a Buck from the New Forest, while we lay at the Isle of Wight, and the Pasty still sticks by us. We have here the finest of Fish, Turbot, vast Soals and Whittings for less than you can eat Plaise in Mdd^x. So that Lord Cromarty^s Banishment from Scotland hither was somewhat less cruel than that of Ovid from Rome to Pontus.¹ We may however say with him—"Quam vicina est ultima Terra mihi!" Ultima Terra you know is the Land^s End which a ten Hours Gale from North or East will carry us to, and where y^r Health with all our Friends left behind us in England will be most cheerfully drunk by

‘ Y^r affect^e Brother

‘ H. FIELDING.

‘ All our loves to my sister.’

This very characteristic epistle is to the full as interesting, and almost as informing as that written ten days earlier from the Isle of Wight. A few sentences need brief comment. In the ‘ Journal ’ the reference to ‘ Middlesex

¹ This reference to Lord Cromarty is doubtless due to Fielding’s connection with the anti-Jacobite press.

A Fielding 'Find'

Turneps' is made clear by the statement that this 'watry vegetable' entered largely into the composition of the metropolitan 'Vinum Pomonæ.'¹ The peculiar description of wine as 'wind,' was, besides being a popular vulgarism,² a curiosity of the Ryde landlady's little account. From the 'Journal' it also seems that Fielding purchased a third hogshead of cider for himself, which brought his expenditure up to £5 10s. 'Cheeshurst,' given in the printed record as the address of Mr. Giles Leverance the salesman, should have been the name of his farm, for in the letter, or rather at the back of it, he is described in another script as of Churston, that is—Churston-Ferrers, a village on the Devon Coast near Brixham. Welch was Saunders Welch, High Constable of Holborn, the friend of Johnson and Hogarth as well as of Fielding, and the father-in-law of Nollekens, the sculptor; Hunter was William Hunter, the 'great surgeon and anatomist of Covent garden'; and Millar was Andrew Millar, Fielding's publisher, of 'Shakespear's Head over-against Katherine Street in the Strand.' Boor, whose trustworthiness is under suspicion, must have been the Richard Boor who was one of the witnesses to the undated Will executed by Fielding at Ealing before his departure from England. He was also, in all likelihood, the bailiff or agent-in-charge of the 'little house' at Ealing (Fordhook),³ which if it involved harvesting and wheat crops, should have had farm-land attached to it. The 'buck,' and the pasty

¹ 'But this I warn Thee, and shall alway warn,
No heterogenous Mixtures use, as some
With watry Turneps have debas'd their Wines.
Too frugal.'—(Philips' 'Cyder,' 1708, Bk. ii.)

² The 'fine gentleman' in 'Humphry Clinker,' it may be remembered, offers to treat Miss Winifred Jenkins with 'a pint of wind' (2nd ed., i, 231).

³ Fordhook no longer exists; and the site, on the Uxbridge Road opposite the Ealing Common Station of the Metropolitan District Railway, is now covered by houses. A sketch of it, as somewhat altered and enlarged by subsequent occupants, is to be found in the Guildhall Library. From a plan in the Ealing Town Hall dated 1741, there were then fields to the north and east, and later tenants seem to have held land. 'Fielding Terrace' and 'Fordhook Avenue' preserve its memory.

Eighteenth Century Studies

which Mrs. Fielding made therefrom, are both mentioned in the 'Journal.' Lord Cromarty was George Mackenzie, the third earl, sentenced to death after the '45, but reprieved. He was allowed to reside at Layhill in Devonshire. The apposite Latin quotation which Fielding makes in this connection is a fresh instance of that natural habit of letters on his part which a cheap criticism is accustomed to stigmatize as pretentious erudition; and the lady referred to in the postscript was probably John Fielding's first wife, Elizabeth Whittingham, whose adopted daughter, Mary Ann, afterwards married the novelist's son Allen.

The seal of this document, part of which remains, displays the double-headed Austrian eagle bearing a coat-of-arms on its breast.¹ The second letter differs considerably from those which have been quoted hitherto. In the first place, it is much longer; and in places exhibits signs of haste and a perturbation of spirit which are absent from its predecessors, although now and again the old joy of life and natural cheerfulness break out irrepressibly. The writing is sometimes scarcely decipherable; and the paper in places is torn and mutilated—a condition of things which fully justifies the treatment by paraphrase of part of its matter. From internal evidence it must have been written about two or three weeks after Fielding reached Lisbon on August 14. For its better comprehension, it may be well to remind the reader that Fielding's party, as expressly stated in the 'Journal,' consisted of *six* persons: namely—Fielding himself; his wife; his eldest daughter, Harriot; Mrs. Fielding's 'friend,' Miss Margaret Collier; and two servants, a footman, William, whose ignoble surname has not survived, and a maid, Isabella Ash, who, with Miss Collier and Richard Boor, had witnessed the Ealing will. Miss Collier, who was a daughter of Arthur Collier, the metaphysician and author of 'Clavis Universalis,' was doubtless well acquainted

¹ This shows that Fielding would probably have disapproved the modern discoveries of Mr. J. Horace Round in regard to the relations of the Denbighs and the Habsburgs.

A Fielding 'Find'

with the family, for her sister, Jane, had collaborated with Sarah Fielding in the 'New Dramatic Fable' of 'The Cry,' published by Dodsley in the March of this year. Though addressed as before to John Fielding, Esq.: 'p. the Lisbon Packet,' the letter begins without further ceremony as follows:

'I am willing to waste no Paper as you see, nor to put you to the Expense of a double Letter as I write by the Packet, by which I would have you write to me every Letter of Consequence, if it be a single Sheet of Paper only it will not cost the more for being full and perhaps you have not time even to fill one Sheet for as I take it the idlest Man in the World writes now to the busiest, and that too at the Expençe of the latter.

'I have rec^d here two Letters from you and one from Welch. The money I have tho I was forced to discount the Note, it being drawn at 36 days Sight upon a Portugese who never doth anything for nothing. I believe as it was in Portugese neither you nor Welch knew this, and it was the Imposition of the Drawer in London. Your Letter of Business I have not yet seen. Perhaps it is lost, as if it came by a Merchant Ship it easily may: for the Captains of these Ships pay no Regard to any but Merchants for which Reason I will have all my Goods even to the smallest Parcel consigned to John Stubbs Esq^r (as I mentioned before, and hope will be done long before y^o receive this) marked with the large red F.— Pardon Repetition for abundans Cautela non nocet, and tho I mentioned my orders, I did not give the Reason I believe either to y^o or Welch, at least all my Reasons for these are Several but this is most worth y^r Notice. The Truth is that Captains are all y^e greatest Scoundrels in the World but Veale is the greatest of them all. This I did not find out till the Day before he sailed, which will explain many Things when you see him as perhaps you may for he is likewise a Madman, which I knew long before I reached Lisbon and he sailed a few Days ago. I shall not, after what I have said, think him worth my Notice, unless he should obiter fall in my Way.

Eighteenth Century Studies

‘ In answer to yours, if you cannot answer . . . yourself, I will assure you once for all I highly approve and thank you, as I am convinced I always shall when y^o act for me, I desire therefore you will always exert unlimited Power on these Occasions.

‘ With regard to the principal Point, my Health, which I have not yet mentioned, I was tapped again (being the 5th time) at Torbay . . . and possibly here I left the Dropsy, for I have heard nothing of it since. . . .

‘ In Short as we advanced to the South, it is incredible how my Health advanced with it, and I have no Doubt but that I should have perfectly recovered my Health at this Day, had it not been obstructed by every possible Accident which Fortune could throw in my Way.’

Here a part is missing; and we may take leave to summarize. The first ‘ accident ’ was that his whole family, ‘ except myself [!], Harriot and Bell ’ (the maid, Isabella), fell ill. William, the footman, a poor creature, having increased his disorder by indulging too freely in the cheap wines of the country, was seized with a panic apprehension of dying in a foreign land, and becoming an object of unmeasured contempt to his deserted master, took ship in the ‘ Queen of Portugal ’ for London. The letter proceeds:

‘ In the next Place I found myself in the dearest City in the World and in the dearest House in that City. I could not for my Soul live for less than 2 Moidores a day [£2 14s.—the old moidore being about 27s.] and saw myself likely to be left Pennyless 1000 miles from home, where I had neither Acquaintance nor Credit among a Set of People who are tearing one another’s Souls out for money and ready to deposite Millions with Security but not a Farthing without. In this Condition moreover I saw no Likelihood nor Possibility of changing my Position. The House I was in being the cheapest of the three in which alone I could get a Lodging with^t being poisoned.

‘ Fortune now seemed to take Pity on me, and brought me by a strange Accident acquainted with one Mr. Stubbs,¹

¹ V. *supra*, p. 271.

A Fielding 'Find'

the greatest Merchant of this Place, and the greatest Corn factor in the World. He hath a little Kintor [*quinta*¹] or Villa at a Place called Jonkera [Junqueira], 2 miles from Lisbon and near Bellisle [Belem]² which is the Kensington of England [Portugal?], and where the Court now reside. Here he likewise got me a little House with^t any manner of Furniture not even a Shelf or even a Kitchin Grate. For this I am to pay 9 Moidores a year, and hither I boldly came with scarce suff^t Money to buy me the Necessar[ies] of Life. . . .'

At this point we may again abridge. In furnishing the 'villakin,' Fielding's funds sank to the lowest ebb. But a well-timed bill arriving from his brother, the tables were turned, and his expenses became moderate. Instead of two moidores a day, he found he could live for less than a moidore per week, and with difficulty exceed it. 'Where then,' he asks, 'was the Misfortune of all this? or what was there which could retard my Recovery, or shock a Philosophy so established as mine which had triumphed over the Terrors of Death when I thought it both certain and near.' The answer is—that Mrs. Fielding, who, as we know, had fallen ill on landing, was still ailing in spirit. The climate of Portugal did not suit her: she was homesick; and probably yearning for her little family at Fordhook. 'She is,' says Fielding, 'I thank God recovered; but so dispirited that she cries and sighs all Day to return to England,' where she believed her husband might complete his convalescence just as well as at Lisbon, since he could not there readily command a coach, or see after his children and his home. This, to Fielding, who felt himself daily growing stronger, was most disquieting; and far more wearing than it would have been to a more selfish or less warm-hearted man. Matters, moreover, were

¹ A *quinta*, in Spanish and Portuguese, is a small farm or country-house, so called because the tenant pays to the landlord a fifth part of the produce.

² Fielding makes the same odd slip in the 'Journal,' adding another by saying that Catherine of Arragon is buried there, whereas he should have written Catherine of Braganza, widow of Charles II. Junqueira is a suburb of Lisbon.

Eighteenth Century Studies

further complicated by the proceedings of that ambiguous 'another' (the word is Fielding's own), who, either as companion or confidante, plays so disturbing a part in many domestic difficulties. She is not named; but she must, we fear, be identified with Margaret Collier. She was poor; she was pushing and clever; she had become a 'Toast of Lisbon'; and she was apparently steadily setting her cap at the English Resident, one Williamson, a friend of Andrew Millar. Probably knowing that if Fielding went home with his wife and daughter she also would have to accompany them, she seems to have originated the insidious suggestion that Mrs. Fielding should go back alone; and that she (Miss Collier) should remain behind in charge, as companion to Harriot. One can easily imagine the intense vexation that, as hope revived and the pressure of necessity decreased, these unpalatable propositions must have caused to Fielding. 'By these means,' he says, 'my Spirits which were at the Top of the House are thrown down into the Cellar.'¹

The passages immediately succeeding deal with plans for defeating Miss Collier's machinations. They show much excusable irritation—and even some incoherency. It is obvious, however, that Fielding has not the slightest intention of prejudicing his last chances of recovery by returning prematurely to England. One of the things he wishes his brother to do, is to send him out a 'conversable Man to be my companion in an Evening, with as much of the Qualifications of Learning, Sense, and Good humour as y^o can find, who will drink a moderate Glass in an Evening or will at least sit with me till one when I do.' He does not know, he goes on, anybody more likely to grow better than himself; he has now vigour and elasticity in his limbs;² gets easily in and out of a carriage; when in it, can ride the whole day; but all this will be lost if he goes back, or if the schemes of 'another' are allowed

¹ This must have been a common eighteenth-century figure, for Cradock uses it to describe Sterne (see p. 221).

² In taking ship at Rotherhithe, he had 'no use of his limbs,' and was hoisted like a log over the side.

A Fielding 'Find'

to prevail. The letter closes with dispersed particulars of presents, chiefly eatables, which he has despatched to friends in England. The list includes Dr. Collier—'whose very name [he adds] I hate'; and who must have been Miss Collier's brother, as her father had long been dead. Then come directions for clothes he desires to have sent out to him, 'for the Winters here are short but cold.' The tailor is to make them wider in the shoulders—a proof that he is putting on flesh. But he must speak for himself:

'Let me have likewise my Tye and a new Mazer Perriwig from Southampton Street, and a new Hat large in the Brim from my Hatter, the corner of Arundel St. I have had a Visit from a Portugese Nobleman, and shall be visited by all as soon as my Kintor is in order. Bell follows Capt Veale to England where he hath promised to marry her. My Family now consists of a black Slave and his Wife, to which I desire you to add a very good perfect Cook, by the first ship, but not by Veale. Scrape together all the Money of mine you can and do not pay a Farthing without my Orders. My Affairs will soon be in a fine Posture, for I can live here, and even make a Figure for almost nothing. In Truth the Produce of the Country is preposterously cheap. I bought three Days ago a Lease of Partridges [leash—that is, three] for ab^t 1.4 English and this Day 5 young Fowls for half a Crown. What is imported from abroad is extravagantly dear, especially what comes from England as doth almost all the provision [?] of Lisbon. I must have from Fordhook likewise 4 Hams a very fine Hog fatted as soon as may be and being cut into Flitches sent me likewise a young Hog made into Pork and salted and pickled in a Tub. A vast large Cheshire cheese and one of Stilton if to be had good and mild. I thank Welch for his, but he was cheated: God bless you and y^{rs} H. Fielding mil annos &c.'

A postscript, of which the end is wanting, reveals further iniquity on the part of William, the footman, who, after his inglorious departure, is found to have cheated his master of £3 12s. by pretending that he had discharged an unpaid bill. This sum is to be deducted from any draft

Eighteenth Century Studies

he may present for payment; and as a mild punishment, he is to be stripped of his livery. As for Isabella, she is 'only a Fool'; and Fielding wishes her to be provided for at that Universal-Registry-Office in which he and his half-brother were jointly concerned.

Of all these matters there is nothing in the 'Journal,' which ends abruptly with the arrival of the 'Queen of Portugal' at Lisbon. What more came to pass in those brief weeks that followed the despatch of the foregoing letter, will now probably never be revealed. At this date, Fielding, it is clear, firmly believed he should recover. But early in October 1754 his joys and sorrows, his frank delight of living and his unconquerable hopefulness, found their earthly close in the quiet English Cemetery. His widow survived him many years, dying at Canterbury as late as March 1802. Harriot, his daughter, eventually married Colonel James Gabriel Montresor, and lived a brief wedded life. As for Miss Margaret Collier, she retired to Ryde; but scarcely, one would imagine, to meditate the memories of her Peninsular manœuvres. In 1755 she wrote to Richardson, complaining that she had been reported to be the author of the 'Journal,' because 'it was so very bad a performance'—a verdict which the excellent Samuel no doubt heartily approved. Another tradition concerning her is, that a profile she cut in paper supplied the initial hint for Hogarth's posthumous portrait of the author of 'Tom Jones.' As if the marvellous eye-memory of Hogarth could possibly have needed such a stimulus! Whether Captain Richard Veal ever married Isabella Ash, the maid, is not recorded; but from what we know of the antecedents of that septuagenarian lady-killer and ex-privateer, he probably did not. It is, however, to be hoped that the feeble and fraudulent William was duly mulcted in the full amount of which he had sought to 'bubble' his confiding employer.¹

¹ The two letters referred to in this paper were sold at Sotheby's on Friday, 15th March, 1912, for £305, being Lots 360 and 361 ('Athenaeum,' 23rd March).

GRAY'S BIOGRAPHER

CONNECTED with Mason's 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Gray' is one of those odd freaks of circumstance by which the whirligig of Time occasionally diverts the philosophic inquirer. Dr. Johnson was a Tory; Mason was a Whig—therefore Johnson did not like Mason. Johnson, moreover, did not like Gray, whom, in conversation, he bracketed with Mason as inferior to Akenside; and this was another reason why he was prejudiced against Mason's biography of Gray. Consequently, one is not surprised to learn that, though he forced himself to read the book because it was 'a common topick of conversation,' he found it 'mighty dull.' 'As to the style (he added), it was fit for the second table'—a figure of disparagement which is included, though not explained, in Dr. Birkbeck Hill's list of 'Dicta Philosophi.' But the piquant point about the great man's judgment is, that it was this very life of Gray by Mason which Boswell made his model for what Macaulay has called, on this occasion without contradiction, the first of all biographies. 'I have resolved,' says Boswell in his introductory pages, 'to adopt and enlarge upon the excellent plan of Mr. Mason in his Memoirs of Gray'—in other words, to intersperse the text with letters which exhibit the man. 'I am absolutely certain,' he had already written to his friend Temple, 'that my mode of biography, which gives . . . a *view* of his [Johnson's] mind in his letters and conversations, is the most perfect that can be conceived.' Thus the book that Johnson found 'mighty dull,' supplied the proximate pattern for Boswell's masterpiece; and as Horace Walpole was not slow to perceive, marked the starting point of a new departure in literary portraiture.

Eighteenth Century Studies

While rejoicing—for Walpole too had views on style—that the ‘Memoirs’ did not imitate ‘the teeth-breaking diction of Johnson,’ he wrote on its first appearance in 1775 that ‘its merit did not depend on the competence of the present age.’ ‘You have,’ he told Mason, ‘fixed the method of biography, and whoever will write a life well must imitate you.’ Walpole’s precept and the practice of Boswell fairly justify some brief parley with that now occulted ‘Person of Importance in his Day’—Gray’s biographer.

For, although in our time the Rev. William Mason, Rector of Aston and Precentor of the Cathedral Church of St. Peter in York, is almost entirely forgotten, in his own he was undoubtedly a ‘person of importance.’ Even Hartley Coleridge, who has written of him at large in the ‘Northern Worthies,’ more, it is to be suspected, because he came within the scheme of that Boreal Biography than from any special admiration for his character and achievement, is constrained to admit that, besides being the friend and biographer of Gray, he was, at the time of writing, ‘the most considerable poet that Yorkshire had produced since Marvell,’ and the hundred-page estimate winds up with the statement that ‘for many years of his life he was England’s greatest living poet.’ This latter, to be sure, is not saying much, though it is difficult to dispute it. Mason was a placid, amiable, well-educated man, and also a highly-respectable specimen of the comfortably-beneficed ecclesiastic of that apathetic Georgian epoch, when, it has been said, little remained in the larger part of the English Church but ‘a decorous sense of duty and a sleepy routine of practice.’ His clerical functions left him ample leisure for ‘Shakespeare and the musical glasses’; and his literary tastes secured him the friendship of Gray and Walpole, of whom he was the diligent correspondent. Without exceptional imagination, he had considerable facility and metrical accomplishment. He wrote elegies and Pindaric odes, tragedies on Greek models with English subjects, satires which are neat but not deadly, and blank verses on gardening—in all of which he

Gray's Biographer

'neither sinks nor soars.'¹ Most of his work is difficult reading now, although we know one septuagenarian who remembers studying 'Caractacus' in his boyhood with romantic interest; and we have little doubt that ladies of quality once wept freely over 'Elfrida.' But it would need complicated hydraulics to extract a solitary tear of sensibility from the present generation. *Autres temps, autres pleurs!*

However this may be, the 'rural Pan' of the period (doubtless a Pan in a Periwig!) appears to have 'breathed' benignly on the 'helpless cradle' of the future author of 'The English Garden.' Mason's father, the Vicar of Holy Trinity in Kingston-upon-Hull, where, in 1724, Mason was born, not only personally superintended his education, but fondly fostered his bias towards verse-writing and painting—a course which, Hartley Coleridge observes, made it unnecessary for him to add 'the curse of disobedience to the calamities of poetry,' and which, in his twenty-second year, he dutifully acknowledged in heroic couplets. At St. John's College, Cambridge, where he was entered in 1743, he found a congenial tutor in Dr. Powell, who, besides directing his attention to classic models, encouraged him in cultivating what Thomas Warton calls 'the warblings of the Doric oate.' Other Cambridge friends were his uncle, Dr. Balguy, and later, Hurd, afterwards Bishop of Worcester. His first model was Milton; and his earliest essays, 'Il Bellicoso' and 'Il Pacifico,' published years afterwards in the first volume of Pearch's 'Miscellany,' were obviously prompted by 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso.' A more ambitious performance, 'Musaeus, a Monody to the Memory of Mr. Pope,' was a professed imitation of 'Lycidas.' This, Gray, then living at Cambridge, was, by the good offices of

¹ Mason himself professed to claim no more than this:

'So, through life's current let me glide,
Nor sink too low, nor rise too high,
Safe if Content my progress guide,
And golden Mediocrity.'

But we must not take modesty too much at its word.

Eighteenth Century Studies

a friend, induced to revise, although he was as yet unknown to the author; and on Dr. Powell's advice it was published by Dodsley in April 1747. It had no small success, and passed into a third edition. To the reader of to-day, in spite of the neatness of the versification, it will seem a rather mechanical performance: but it may be admitted that the poet shows a certain originality by making Milton, Chaucer, and Spenser visit Pope, 'in the trance preceding his departure,' for the purpose of assuring him of their own poetical unworthiness. This they do in character. Chaucer, the Tityrus of the deputation, thanks Pope for making his 'sely rymes,' 'ren right sote'; Milton, its Thyrsis, addresses him Miltonically in sonorous blank verse; while Spenser (Colin Clout), after the fashion of M. Edmond Rostand, borrows the imagery of his stanza from the farmyard:

Like as in village troop of birdlings trim,
Where Chanticleer his red crest high doth hold,
And quacking ducks, that wont in lake to swim,
And turkeys proud, and pigeons nothing bold;
If chance the peacock doth his plumes unfold,
Eftsoons their meaner beauties all decaying,
He glist'neth purple and he glist'neth gold,
Now with bright green, now blue himself arraying.
Such is thy beauty bright, all other beauties swaying.

To which Pope replies in a valedictory allocution which shows that Mason could also successfully echo the Popesque note. Whether, as his critic maliciously suggests, the speakers' mode of speech be, or be not, studied from Pope's paraphrases rather than the originals, these imitations certainly serve to explain why, in after years, Mason was so quick to decide on the fictitious element in Chatterton's Rowley poems.

According to Mr. Ralph Straus's recent life of Dodsley, the reception of 'Musaeus' made Mason anxious to undertake the task, afterwards so liberally performed by Thomas Warton, of editing Milton's *Minor Poems*. 'I have often thought it,' he writes, 'a great pitty that many of the Beautiful Peices it [the "3rd vol. of Milton"] contains shou'd be so little read as they certainly are, I fancy

Gray's Biographer

this has arisen from the bad thing they are tack'd to [?]. I want vastly to have a separate edition of the Tragedy, Mask, Lycidas & Lallagro, &c.' But Tonson, to whom the copyright belonged, proved intractable, and the idea came to nothing. Meanwhile, early in 1748, Dodsley brought out the first three volumes of his 'Collection of Poems by Several Hands,' in the last of which he reprinted 'Musaeus' (with a ridiculous illustration by Frank Hayman); and included a fresh piece by Mason, an 'Ode to a Water-Nymph.' With this arises Gray's first written reference to Mason, who was seven years his junior: 'Mr. Mason [he writes from Stoke to Dr. Wharton of Durham] is my Acquaintance. I liked that Ode very much [the ode just mentioned], but have found no one else that did. he has much Fancy, little Judgement, & a good deal of Modesty. I take him for a good & well-meaning Creature; but then he is really *in Simplicity a Child*, & loves everybody he meets with: he reads little or nothing, writes abundance & that with a design to make his fortune by it.'¹

Mason had the courage to reprint this not entirely flattering picture in his later 'Memoirs' of Gray, remarking only on the last words that, at the period referred to, he was, in truth, 'perfectly well satisfied if his publications furnished him with a few guineas to see a play or an opera.' But evidently he did not share Gray's nervous horror of being paid for his productions. As regards the 'Ode to a Water-Nymph,' it may here be noted that Dodsley's version closes with a laudation of Lyttelton and Lyttelton's eloquence, of the beauties of Lyttelton's seat at Hagley, and of the monody on the death of his charming first wife, which had come out in Dodsley's second volume. All this was afterwards suppressed, and the poem 'concluded according to the Author's original idea'—a proceeding for which no explanation is vouchsafed, though it is easy to suggest one. Whether Mason was already acquainted with Lyttelton does not appear.

¹ Tovey's 'Letters of Thomas Gray,' 1900, i, 178. This extract illustrates Gray's employment and neglect of capitals, as also his use of the ampersand.

Eighteenth Century Studies

But if, as stated by Mr. Courtney¹ in his attractive little study of Dodsley's collection, most of the pieces it contained were submitted to Lyttelton before they were 'passed for printing,' nothing would be more natural than that it should occur, or should even be suggested by Dodsley, to one of the contributors that an opportunity might be found for gracefully flattering a distinguished statesman and patron of letters. And Mason, if not a strikingly original thinker, was quite acute enough to anticipate and act upon the worldly-wise injunction of Martin Routh of Magdalen: 'Attach yourself to some great man, Sir! Many have risen to eminence in that way.'

Gray's letter to Wharton is dated 5th June 1748; and in another to Walpole he speaks of his new friend's 'Musaeus' as seeming 'to carry with it a promise at least of something good to come.' In 1745 Mason had taken his B.A., and quitted St. John's with a valedictory Ode to Dr. Powell. In the following year a second Ode commemorated his expectation to return to Cambridge, since, chiefly on the recommendation of Gray, he had been nominated to a Fellowship in Pembroke Hall. Owing, however, to the opposition of the Master, Dr. Long, he was not elected until early in 1749. In February of the same year he published a monologue entitled 'Isis,' directed against the supposed spirit of Jacobitism prevailing at Oxford, as evidenced by recent disorderly demonstrations amongst the gownsmen in favour of King James the Third. In this the goddess, tearful and dilapidated, or, as her poet puts it, 'in all the awful negligence of woe,' is made to invoke the shades of Sidney and Hampden, of Addison and Locke, to console her for the disloyalty of her seditious sons. The piece was promptly parodied by Byrom, and being also answered with considerable vigour by the future laureate, Thomas Warton, then of Trinity College, Oxford, Mason, perhaps not uninfluenced by a polite reference to 'Musaeus,' had the good sense to admit himself outdone. His next effort was a composition to

¹ 'Dodsley's Collection of Poetry: its Contents and Contributors.' By the late W. P. Courtney, 1910, p. 2.

Gray's Biographer

be set to music, written, at the request of the authorities, for the installation as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge of that egregious personage, Thomas Pelham Holles, Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State for the Northern Department in the Pelham Administration. The musician was Dr. Boyce; and it was performed in the Senate House on 1st July 1749; as part of what Gray, making report to Wharton, calls a 'Week of Wonders': 'Every one, while it lasted, was very gay, & very busy in the Morning, & very owlish & very tipsy at Night. I make no exception [he adds] from the Chancellour to Blew-Coat [the Vice-Chancellor's servant]. Mason's Ode was the only Entertainment that had any tolerable Elegance; & for my own Part, I think it (with some little abatements) uncommonly well on such an Occasion.'

By this time its author is 'growing apace into his good Graces, as he knows him more.' 'He is very ingenious with great Good-Nature & Simplicity, a little vain, but in so harmless & so comical a Way, that it does not offend one at all; a little ambitious, but withall so ignorant in the World & its Ways, that this does not hurt him in one's Opinion. so sincere & so undisguised that no Mind with a Spark of Generosity would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to Injury. but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this Habit, all his good Qualities will signify nothing at all. after all I like him so well, I could wish you knew him.' Some of these 'characteristics of the poetical temperament,' as Chalmers calls them, seem to have adhered to Mason through life; others, it is significantly added, were 'effaced by a closer intimacy with the world.' But from Gray's words, it is clear that Mason was already in a fair way to become the familiar 'Skroddles' of their future correspondence.

That correspondence, nevertheless, did not begin until July 1753, when Gray's first published letter to Mason is dated. In the interval Gray's famous 'Elegy' came out; and in the same letter in which he writes to Walpole of its premature publication, he mentions a play, 'wrote by a person he has a very good opinion of.' He proposes to

Eighteenth Century Studies

send Walpole the beginning: 'It is (unfortunately) in the manner of the ancient drama, with choruses, which I am to my shame the occasion of; for, as great part of it was at first written in that form, I would not suffer him to change it to a play fit for the stage, and as he intended, because the lyric parts are the best of it, they must have been lost. The story is Saxon, and the language has a tang of Shakespeare, that suits an old-fashioned fable very well.' In a later letter he tells Walpole that the author and the piece are in town together; and begs for Walpole's observations, engaging not to betray more of his verdict than may be 'fit for the ears of a tender parent,' who, he adds, 'has ingenuity and merit enough (whatever his drama may have) to bear hearing his faults very patiently.' Whether Walpole's criticism was favourable or unfavourable is not recorded; but the play was published by Knapton in March 1752, under the title of 'Elfrida; a dramatic poem, written on the model of the antient Greek Tragedy. By Mr. Mason.'

Prefixed to 'Elfrida' is a sequence of letters in which the author sets forth his attempt to write an English play on Greek lines, a contradiction in conception to which, in spite of all opposition, he continued obstinately attached. Hartley Coleridge discusses these prolegomena, as well as the play itself, with much learning and at considerable length; but it is useless to reproduce here his arguments for or against a work no longer under discussion. The real *Ælfthryth* or *Elfrida*, daughter of *Orgar*, ealdorman of Devonshire, became the second wife of *Edgar*, king of England. Subsequently, according to William of Malmesbury, she entered upon a wedded career quite discreditable enough to qualify her for the highest walks of Attic tragedy. Mason, however, did not needlessly hamper himself with historical accuracy. He makes *Edgar* send his minister *Athelwold* to offer his crown to *Elfrida*. But *Athelwold* falls in love with the lady himself; marries her, and hides her—with a convenient chorus of British virgins—in a secluded castle in Harewood Forest. To this retreat she is tracked by her father and *Edgar*. *Athel-*

Gray's Biographer

wold is killed by the king in single combat; and dies murmuring (like Richardson's Lovelace), 'This atones for all.' Thereupon Elfrida promptly gets her to a nunnery. The play contains many careful lyric passages, especially in the choruses; and 'the Shakespearean tang' is often not unskilful. But the primary and fundamental difficulty—the reconciling of English sentimental drama with the atmosphere and machinery of the Greek stage—is not satisfactorily overcome. In book form 'Elfrida' had, notwithstanding, considerable success, but at the date of issue no attempt was made to put it on the boards.¹

Towards the close of 1753, Mason lost the father who had so carefully watched over his boyish studies. From his correspondence with Gray, it would seem that a second marriage had practically deprived him of his paternal estate, and reduced his means to his Pembroke Hall Fellowship. He consequently took orders in 1754; and being fortunate enough to secure a patron in the Earl of Holderness (a Secretary of State), was appointed, not only his domestic chaplain, but was presented to the living of Aston, near Rotherham, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. In the former of these capacities his duties carried him to the Continent, where he met another Cambridge man, William Whitehead, then travelling as governor, or tutor,

¹ Some of its admirers must have been extravagant enough to satisfy the most exacting literary self-esteem. A rhymer in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for March 1752—with a profusion worthy of Browning's Italian sonneteer—contrives in six lines to compare Mason to (1) Sophocles, (2) Plato, (3) Pindar, (4) Homer, and (5) Virgil. Then, pausing to regret that his

'noble scenes should stand no chance

With a dull *Pantomime*, or paltry dance!'

he goes on to predict that

'ELFRIDA still shall shine, and MASON's name

Distinguish'd stand in the bright roll of fame,

Till time shall stop, 'till nature's frame decay,

And earth, and sea, and heav'n pass in one blaze away.'

And yet Mason's name is not included in Mr. Humphry Ward's Pantheon of 'English Poets'! Nor—ode-maker as he was—does he gain a place in Mr. Edmund Gosse's anthology of that form; although, of necessity, he finds judicial record in Mr. Courthope's monumental 'History of English Poetry.' The lines in the 'Gentleman' are signed 'R. D.' (Query—Robert Dodsley.)

Eighteenth Century Studies

to Lord Villiers and Lord Nuneham. All three are mentioned in a letter to Gray from Hanover of June 1755, in which Mason regales his correspondent with a burlesque kit-cat of the local librarian (who might have served as a model for Chodowiecki), and an account of a Hamburg lady with the uneuphonious name of Belcht, who had read the 'Elegy' with mild enthusiasm, but was entranced by the 'Nitt Toats' of Young. In March of the following year, reverting to the choric measures with which 'Elfrida' had originated, Mason printed four odes—on Memory, Independency, Melancholy, and the Fate of Tyranny.

It is said that the odes were not well received, and that the tendency of the author to purple epithets and alliterative arts was freely criticized. Nevertheless, a second edition followed in April. Of the four pieces named that on Memory is the best, though Gray regarded as 'superlative' a Gray-like couplet in 'Melancholy' ('To a Friend'):

While thro' the west, where sinks the crimson Day,
Meek Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banner gray.

'The Fate of Tyranny' is a paraphrase of part of the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah—a task which might well have overburdened even a bolder bard than Mason; and whether 'Independency' is better or worse than Smollett is, as Hartley Coleridge says, no matter. In August 1757 Horace Walpole printed at Strawberry Hill, and Dodsley published Gray's 'Progress of Poesy' and 'The Bard'; after which, in March 1758, Gray's Odes and two of Mason's were included in the sixth and final volume of Dodsley's Collection. How, not long afterwards, both Mason and his friend were assailed by the parodists Lloyd and Colman, has already been related;¹ and it is only necessary to add now, what was not then stated, that Mason seems to have taken the matter much more to heart than Gray, who, having apparently assimilated Lanoue's precept '*la plainte est pour le sot*,' philosophically declined to 'combustle' about it. But Mason had

¹ See 'At Prior Park,' etc., 1912, pp. 220-3.

Gray's Biographer

much to lose; for 'The Bard' is still studied, and few have even heard of the 'Ode to Memory.'

By this date, Mason must already have been far advanced with 'Caractacus,' another and more ambitious dramatic poem 'on the model of the ancient Greek tragedy,' for Gray is already criticizing some form of it in December 1756; and by September of the next year has read over the MS. twice 'not with pleasure only, but with emotion.' 'The contrivance, the manners, the interests, the passions, and the expression go (he considers) beyond the dramatic part of "Elfrida" many leagues'; and he proceeds to devote one of the longest of his letters to close criticism of the details. 'Caractacus' was published in May 1759, and deals with the story of that King of the Silures who, taking sanctuary with the Druids in Anglesea, was afterwards captured and sent to Rome. The Chorus, still a salient feature of Mason's plan, is composed of Druids and Bards. The background is one that lends itself to impressive landscape painting; the fable is stronger; the characterization more firm; and the lyric parts more finished than in 'Elfrida.' Indeed, it would not be difficult to make quotations, could they be more than dislocated fragments. But the insuperable difficulty remains, that, however effective as a dramatic poem, 'Caractacus,' like its predecessor, is no more an acting play than, according to Sir Arthur Pinero, is Browning's 'Blot in the 'Scutcheon.' In 1772 Colman brought out an adapted 'Elfrida,' against the author's will, threatening him, when he expostulated, with a chorus of Grecian washerwomen. Mason afterwards altered it himself; and it was again performed, without success, in 1776. A somewhat better fate attended the concurrent production of 'Caractacus,' but even that never obtained any permanent place on the stage.¹

¹ Walpole's opinion of 'Caractacus' was not as favourable as Gray's. 'Mr. Mason [he tells George Montagu in June 1759] has published another drama, called "Caractacus"; there are some incantations poetical enough, and odes so Greek as to have very little meaning. But the whole is laboured, uninteresting, and no more resembling the manners of Britons than of Japanese.' On

Eighteenth Century Studies

After 'Caractacus,' Mason's next publication was a shilling pamphlet of three elegies issued by Dodsley in December 1762, though dated 1763. Two of these, the elegy 'Written in the Garden of a Friend' (Robert Wood, the author of 'Palmyra' and 'Baalbec'), and that 'On the Death of a Lady' (Maria, Lady Coventry), which was so great a favourite with Rogers—are among his best efforts in this kind. Another Elegy, not included in the trio, and inscribed to Dr. Hurd, then rector of Thurstaston in Leicestershire, figures as a dedication to 'Caractacus.' Here Mason develops his dramatic purpose. His desire, he says, had been to persuade the tragic Muse of Sophocles, with her 'golden lyre' and 'buskin'd pomp,' to bring to Britain her 'choral throng,' and 'mingle Attic art with SHAKESPEARE'S fire.' To which the Muse replies oracularly:

Mistaken suppliant, know,
To light in SHAKESPEARE'S breast the dazzling flame
Exhausted all PARNASSUS could bestow.
True; Art remains; and, if from his bright page
Thy mimic power one vivid beam can seize,
Proceed; and in that best of tasks engage,
Which tends at once to profit and to please.

In 1764 these pieces, with all his previous poems, except the 'Isis' and the 'Installation Ode' (which latter was probably withheld because the author had got nothing out of 'Old Fobus,' as he and Gray profanely called the Duke of Newcastle), were collected in one volume. The former reference to Lyttelton in the 'Ode to a Water Nymph' was withdrawn,¹ Mason having now a practicable patron in Lord Holderness, to whom the book was dedicated, and who, besides giving him the Aston living and the other hand, the 'Biographia Dramatica' is almost as hysterical as Mr. Urban's critic of 'Elfrida.' Conceding that 'Caractacus' was never intended for the English stage, 'in the closet'—it goes on—'it lays the strongest claim to immortality, and is one among a few instances, that poetical genius is so far from its decline at this time in these realms, that we have writers now living, some of whose works no British bard whatsoever, Shakspeare, Spenser and Milton not excepted, would have reason to blush at being the author of.'

¹ In a letter of June 1760 Gray speaks of Lyttelton as 'your old patron,' so that, at some time, Mason must have had hopes from that quarter.

Gray's Biographer

helping to procure him a chaplainship to George II, had recently obtained for him the precentorship of York Cathedral. This, with a York residentiary canonry, which he owed to another friend, Frederick Montagu, increased his means by about £400 per annum, so that his hunger for advancement—his 'insatiable repining mouth,' Gray called it—if not satisfied, should, for the moment at least, have been appeased. The next important occurrence in his life was his marriage on 25th September 1765,¹ to Miss Mary Sherman of Kingston-upon-Hull, a beautiful and amiable young woman, to whom he seems to have been genuinely attached. His happiness, however, was of brief duration. Mrs. Mason proved consumptive, and in spite of sedulous nursing, died at the Bristol Hot Wells in March 1767, being then twenty-eight. She is buried in the north aisle of Bristol Cathedral under an epitaph composed by her husband which, like most of Mason's work, has been praised and dispraised. By one modern critic of distinction it is frankly denounced as 'fustian'; but the popular voice—influenced probably by the occasion—is in its favour.² Mason's own part of it, the first twelve lines, may be conventional enough;³ but the beauty of the final quatrain, contributed by Gray, who also wrote an admirable letter to his bereaved friend, would be sufficient to efface far better lapidary work than Mason's:

Tell them, though 'tis an awful thing to die,
('Twas ev'n to thee) yet the dread path once trod,
Heav'n lifts its everlasting portals high,
And bids 'the pure in heart behold their God.'

¹ An extract from the register of St. Mary Lowgate was communicated to 'Notes and Queries' in October 1881 by the late Arthur Munby.

² A sentimental eighteenth-century admirer, and votary of the 'Sorrows of Werther,' Miss Eliza Dawson of Oxton in Yorkshire, had long cherished the hope of seeing Mason on account of this epitaph. But when her hopes were at last realized, she was dismayed to find him 'a little fat old man of hard-featured countenance,' entirely absorbed in his game of whist. (Paston's 'Side-Lights on the Georgian Period,' 1902, p. 259.)

³ Of one expression: 'She bow'd to taste the wave,' it is but fair to state that, according to Pearch's 'Miscellany,' 1775, i, 217, Mrs. Mason actually died 'while drinking a glass of the waters.'

Eighteenth Century Studies

Gray says that Hurd objected to the third line. But the imagery is legitimately Biblical, and it is hard to see why objection was raised. In any case, it is fortunate that Mason did not avail himself of Gray's generous permission to 'make another' line in its place if he pleased.

That Mason deeply felt his loss there is no doubt. Although long, in Gray's phrase, 'in a "mariturient" way,' he had been over deliberate in deciding. He was forty when he became a husband, and his wedded life lasted no longer than eighteen months. But it gave him something to think of besides himself; it was his happiest time; and, as Southey says, being happy he was cheerful. After his wife's death, he lapsed again into his old listless habit of discontent—a discontent no doubt intensified by the remembered 'tempo felice.' His chief distraction seems to have been gardening. Already, in the dedicatory sonnet to Lord Holderness prefixed to the poems of 1764, he had referred to this:

Here, as the light-wing'd moments glide serene,
I weave the bower, around the tufted mead
In careless flow the simple pathway lead,
And strew with many a rose the shaven green.

He was a fervent adherent of the new landscape school; and for the further solace of his mind began, soon after his wife's death, to work at his most prolonged poetical effort, the 'English Garden,' of which the first book, setting forth the pervading principle, appeared in 1772. The three remaining books, containing practical directions and making some two thousand five hundred lines in all, followed at leisurely intervals, the last appearing in 1782, when an Irish friend, Dr. Burgh, added an elaborate commentary and notes.

Warton, who did not like Mason, nevertheless describes the 'English Garden' as 'didactic poetry brought to perfection by the happy combination of judicious precepts with the most elegant ornaments of language and imagery.' The verdict is a little machine-made; but it was no doubt honest. Hartley Coleridge, writing many years later, thought it 'one of the duller poems he had

Gray's Biographer

ever attempted to read,' and he obviously was equally in earnest. Which is right? A not unreasonable answer would be 'Both.' Warton was judging the 'English Garden' as an eighteenth-century didactic poem. To-day we do not care greatly for didactic poetry, however ingeniously decorated. Yet we should hardly go as far as Hartley Coleridge. Those who are curious in landscape gardening (and there are still a few!); those who love to read of bowling-greens, and Ha Ha's, and cascades, and hermitages, and the temples of Signor Borra, and the sham ruins of Sanderson Miller, to say nothing of that wise Sidonian king whom Fanny Burney called 'Abdolumine'—might well find their account in Mason's pages. It is true that blank verse offered pitfalls to his taste for redundancy; it is true also that, before the first book appeared, he had lost the patient and judicious critic who had so often pruned his luxuriations and 'castigated' his vocabulary. To this he himself refers in opening Book iii:

Clos'd is that curious ear, by Death's cold hand,
That mark'd each error of my careless strain
With kind severity; to whom my Muse
Still lov'd to whisper, what she meant to sing
In louder accent; to whose taste supreme
She first and last appeal'd, nor wish'd for praise,
Save when his smile was herald to her fame.

And so forth. Some lines that follow refer to a special memorial which he erected to his friend at Aston. This was a rustic alcove, or summer-house, which contained an urn and medallion portrait of Gray. Over the entrance was a lyre surmounted by the poet's motto from Pindar to his Odes; and below, on a tablet, with slight variation, came one of the discarded stanzas of the 'Elegy':

*Here scatter'd oft, the loveliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
The red-breast loves to build and warble here,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.*

According to Murray's Handbook of Yorkshire for 1904, at that date this historic summer-house was still in existence at Aston, where the garden continued to pre-

Eighteenth Century Studies

serve the old stretches of greensward, the winding walks between the trees, and the openings which revealed the 'distant blue' of the Derbyshire hills referred to in Mason's last and best anniversary sonnet:

Yet still my eyes can seize the distant blue
Of yon wild Peak, and still my footsteps bold,
Unprop'd by staff, support me to behold
How Nature, to her Maker's mandate true,
Calls Spring's impartial heralds to the view,
The snowdrop pale, the crocus spik'd with gold.

On 30th July 1771, Gray died, and was buried on 6th August in Stoke-Poges churchyard. He left to Mason £500, together with all his 'books, manuscripts, coins, music printed or written, and papers of all kinds, to preserve or destroy at his own discretion.' Out of this bequest Mason began, not long afterwards, to prepare Gray's 'Memoirs.' Borrowing a hint either from his own indolence, or Conyers Middleton's life of Cicero, and discarding the stereotyped method of his day, he proceeded, by printing Gray's letters with a brief connecting narrative and notes, to make him, as far as possible, 'his own biographer,' and in this way to present 'a regular and clear delineation of his life and character.' His plan proved excellent; and it was at once adopted by subsequent writers as the true method of life-writing. It remains the true method of life-writing still—where there are letters, be it understood; but in Mason's case there was one grave defect, of which his contemporaries were happily ignorant. Regarding Gray's correspondence as mere raw material, he treated it in a way which would now be regarded as disingenuous. A biographer is no doubt entitled to suppress or withhold as he thinks fit, but he is not justified in garbling or falsifying. Mason practically did both. He left out passages without indicating that anything had been omitted; he turned two letters into one; and he freely altered the wording in others where he thought alteration was required. He may possibly have held that he was justified in what he did by the custom of his day; and it is not necessary to

Gray's Biographer

suppose him wilfully misleading. But he certainly cannot be defended on one plea which has been put forward in his defence, namely—that he could not foresee the future interest which would attach to Gray as an author. The question is one of editorial good faith; and it remains a serious drawback to a work which Rogers read and re-read delightedly; which Miss Mitford regarded as ‘one of the most attractive books ever written’; and which, sophisticated though it be, does not give an unfavourable or inadequate picture of Mason’s friend and critic.

Little requires to be said of Mason after the appearance in 1775 of Gray’s biography. One of the accidents of its preparation was that it brought about a prolonged correspondence with Horace Walpole, only interrupted at last by political differences. The first book of ‘The English Garden’ also led to the ‘Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers,’ already sufficiently treated in a former collection of these papers,¹ although it may be stated here, as further proof of the extravagant praise which, even when its author wrote anonymously, he received from his contemporaries, that Hannah More regarded it as, both for matter and versification, ‘the best satire since the “Dunciad”!’ Mason followed up the ‘Heroic Epistle’ by some minor satirical pieces, which add little to his reputation, even if they reveal unsuspected power of epigrammatic invective. Beyond dispersed Odes and Sonnets, his chief remaining work was a translation into heroic verse of Du Fresnoy’s ‘De Arte Graphica,’ dedicated to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who annotated it. He also painted Mason’s portrait; and, by will, left him Cooper’s miniature of Milton.² Politics occupied much of Mason’s later years, though, besides gardening, he found some time for hobbies such as painting and church music. His

¹ ‘Old Kensington Palace, and Other Papers,’ 1910, p. 222 *et seq.*

² Mason left this to Dr. Burgh, and it is now at Rokeby in the possession of the Morritt family. A letter from Mason to Malone respecting it is printed in Prior’s ‘Malone,’ 1860, p. 193. Although it is by Samuel Cooper it is not now held to represent Milton (see Dr. G. C. Williamson on ‘The Cooper Miniature’ in the ‘Catalogue of the Portraits, Prints, and Writings of John Milton,’ exhibited at Christ’s College, Cambridge, 1908, pp. 17, 80-2).

Eighteenth Century Studies

musical gifts were fully recognized, and he was one of the favoured persons to whom Dr. Burney presented his book on the 'Present State of Music in France and Italy.' Of his painting, examples are the altar-piece of the 'Good Samaritan' at Nuneham church, and a not-very-pleasing pencil-sketch of Gray at Pembroke College.¹ As to politics, the acme of his many glorifications of Freedom and Liberty was a Secular Ode (1788) on the Anniversary of the Landing of King William at Torbay. But the terrible object lesson of the French Revolution proved as disturbing to Mason as to Walpole; and in 1797 he published a shuddering palinode, bidding 'Avaunt!' to 'abhorr'd Democracy.' In April of the same year he died, aged seventy-two. He has a monument in Westminster Abbey, next to Gray, and a tablet in Aston Church.

Both as a writer and a personality Mason is exceedingly difficult to appraise. That much of the simplicity, modesty and amiability with which Gray credited him on their first acquaintance was not permanently done away by subsequent commerce with the world, is quite conceivable; nor is it necessary to doubt that he 'discharged the common offices of life as a man and a clergyman, with a uniform propriety and decorum.' In later life he inherited an estate which brought his income up to £1500 a year; and of this he is said to have given away a third in 'patronage and charity.' But his correspondence, published by Mitford long after his death, does not exhibit him in an entirely attractive aspect. He praises retirement yet hankers after the 'Cambridge coffee-houses'; he combines the most lofty view of poetry with the keenest eye for the financial results; he courts criticism and finesses to avert it; he preaches 'golden mediocrity' (an ill-chosen phrase!), but is always pushing uneasily for fresh preferment. These after all are only human frailties, though they illustrate the inexpediency of following up 'the full voice which circles round the grave' by the frank disclosure of familiar

¹ There is a copy of it in Gosse's 'Works of Gray,' 1884, vol. iii.

Gray's Biographer

communications. As to his poetry, we should scarcely now be governed by the 'Gentleman's Magazine' or even the 'Biographia Dramatica'; but when one realizes that he was praised by a Quarterly Reviewer, as late as 1816, for 'metrical epitaphs' that rival Dryden, and 'sonnets' that far surpass Milton, one can only 'stare and gasp.' It is true that the same critic curses as well as blesses, for he credits him (justly) with 'superfluity' and a 'diction florid even to the confines of bombast.' He has sometimes been compared with Gray—and he would not have objected; but any one who cares to make that comparison experimentally has only to take up Dodsley's last volume (which closes with Mason's Odes to Independency and Melancholy followed by Gray's 'Progress of Poesy' and 'Bard') in order to perceive that there is a material difference between the master and the scholar, the difference of genius.¹ Correct, well-equipped, copious, Mason is mainly imitative; and what is best in him he owes to Gray and Gray's criticism. He ranks with those versemen who mistake memory for inspiration, and facility for distinction; who reject living humanity, and rejoice in lifeless personification; whose art, if it sometimes instructs, seldom really moves or elevates. One of his sonnets is addressed to that 'emblem pure of legal liberty,' a 'Gravel Walk.' A great Elizabethan once wrote another to the 'Highway' which—for the nonce—was his 'chief Parnassus.' But there is nothing of the 'gravel walk' about Sir Philip Sidney. There is too much of it in William Mason.

¹ See also the additions which, as he says, he had the 'boldness' to make to Gray's unfinished 'Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude' ('Poems and Memoirs,' 2nd ed., 1775, pp. 235, 76).

NOTES

NOTE 1, p. 23. A QUONDAM BLUE COAT BOY. This rests upon Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, and Leigh Hunt's *London Journal* (Supp. No. 2, 1834). But Richardson's name cannot be traced in the school registers.

NOTE 2, p. 24. THE GRANGE. Sir E. Burne-Jones died on the 17th June 1898, and Richardson's old house is now No. 111 North End Road, West Kensington.

NOTE 3, p. 55. DR. SAMUEL CLARKE'S EDITION OF HOMER. This has now been transferred to the keeping of a more worthy Johnsonian than the present writer—the Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell.

NOTE 4, p. 81. MATTHEW PRIOR. Those who wish to learn more of Prior will do well to consult Mr. Francis Beckley's valuable biography, Pitman, 1914.

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